

**ON  
TRACK  
OFF  
ROAD**









*Congrats Cooper!*  
*250 MX Champ'*







**AMA-MX**

## **Roczen makes it two...**

Supercross evades Ken Roczen. The German celebrated his second 450MX championship at Budds Creek for round eleven of the series last weekend and with another 1-1 which means the alleged HRC rider for 2017 holds a streak of eighteen moto victories, three second position and a worst result of fourth place for the entire '16 campaign. Impressive stuff. Now just to sort out the Indoors...

Photo by Simon Cudby











## Who's the daddy...?

Cal Crutchlow could easily have been trending on Twitter last Sunday. The Honda rider's elasticated season of form and results snapped back in another direction with a long-awaited win for his country (35 years no less) in the rain of Brno. It took '35' three teams, three bikes, 98 Grands Prix and six years to make it happen but he did it with style and guts in the Czech Republic

Photo by CormacGP



**MotoGP**









**MX**

## **Poised...**

Tim Gasjer is less than a week away from a remarkable feat in Grand Prix motocross; the Slovenian needs to emerge from this weekend's Grand Prix of the Netherlands (as Assen for just the second time) with one more point than Tony Cairoli to be the first back-to-back winner of titles in MX2 and MXGP classes this century

**Photo by Ray Archer**













# WITHOUT LIMITS

The way you ride a bike has changed over the years. Our 2017 FLEXAIR racewear has evolved to match the progressive style of Ken Roczen. Now you can ride as free and unrestricted as the world's best racers.



**LIGHTWEIGHT**



**STRETCH**



**VENTING**

*TRLDRI*

**COMFORT**

*TRUMOTION*

**DURABLE**

## FLEXAIR



**2017 AVAILABLE NOW**  
FOXHEAD.COM





**MotoGP**

# **HJC HELMETS GRAND PRIX**

**BRNO · AUGUST 21st · Rnd 11 of 18**

**MotoGP winner: Cal Crutchlow, Honda**

**Moto2 winner: Jonas Folger, Kalex**

**Moto3 winner: John McPhee, Peugeot**



Photos by CormacGP [www.cormacgp.com](http://www.cormacgp.com)

Words by Steve English

Blogs by David Emmett & Gavin Emmett

MOTOGP DOUBLED UP WITH AUSTRIA AND CZECH REPUBLIC KEEPING THE PADDOCK BUSY AND PRODUCING WINS FOR ANDREA IANNONE AND CAL CRUTCHLOW IN FRONT OF 95,000 AND 181,700 (WEEKEND FIGURE) RESPECTIVELY AT RED BULL RING AND BRNO. BLOGS FROM THE 'EMMETTS' AND SOME CRACKING CORMACGP IMAGERY FROM ROUND ELEVEN LIES WITHIN...

# **CAL MAKES THE CULL**







**I**s there anything better than claiming your first MotoGP win? For Cal Crutchlow the recent birth of his first child, daughter Willow, was a clear winner in the “days of your life” stakes but his Brno masterpiece was easily the best day of his professional career.

Crutchlow has been an easy target for criticism this season but when it's mattered most he's performed superbly. The Honda rider has had lots of crashes in 2016 but his performances at the Sachsenring and Brno have been top notch. In a season where the Honda has clearly struggled and Marc Marquez has been riding on another planet Crutchlow has slowly rebuilt his confidence and found momentum over the summer.

Overcoming the odds has been a constant theme during Crutchlow's career and Sunday was no exception following a huge crash on Saturday: “I'm really pleased and obviously it's been a long time coming,” said a grinning Crutchlow after the race. “I've been close at a couple of races like Sachsenring [where Crutchlow finished second] and some others in the past, but nothing is greater than winning. Honestly, it's the best feeling in the world because yesterday I made a disaster and I had to say sorry to my team and to Honda.”

“I don't think there was any conceivable part left on the bike because it must've went six-and-a-half feet in the air – just the engine. The rest was completely destroyed so they had to work really hard to build me a bike for today and it's really nice to repay them. It's a long race I can tell you and it's a long race when Lucio [Cecchinello] is hanging over pit wall, jumping up and down. If I could have taken my hand off the bar I would've stuck my middle finger up to say, 'go back inside to the garage and have a coffee or something!'”

Winning races is something that becomes a statistic very quickly but the manner of victory is something that becomes the talking point. For a man that hasn't won since moving across from WorldSBK in 2010 this was a calculating and com-

fortable success from a rider in complete control. Crutchlow got faster and faster throughout and at one point he was lapping two seconds a lap faster than the leaders.

Nerves would have been excused in the closing stages but instead Crutchlow plunged the dagger ever deeper into his rivals and from when he hit the front consistently increased his lead. It was a display as dominant as it was historic and it all came down to his decision to go his own way with tyre choice.

“Sure, we won a tricky race, but I made the best tyre choice on the grid and I felt that if I went with the hard, rear I had to go with the hard front. I had so much grip compared to the other guys and I was cruising around. I knew the race would come to me in the end. It was really difficult on the first five laps, not with the front really, but with the rear tyre on the left-hand side because it was difficult to heat but once it started to dry it was perfect.”

“At one point I looked up at the big screen and I saw Valentino coming so I thought, ‘OK, I have to go now because I'm in trouble’. I didn't know if Vale had the hard front tyre, so I started to push a little and then I saw the gap going up. It was 1.5 and then a few laps later it was four seconds. With four laps to go, I nearly had a crash in turn 10 because I changed to sixth gear when normally we would keep fifth gear and then I didn't stop and I thought, ‘oh no’. Then I said, ‘OK just keep calm’ and after that I was just cruising around,” added Crutchlow. “Honestly, I made the perfect choice and once I understood that Valentino was not coming or that nobody was coming for me, I just rode around and finished the race.”

35 years is a long time. Valentino Rossi is the only MotoGP rider who was alive on the final day of the 1981 season when Barry Sheene claimed the last win of his remarkable career. It's been 532 races since that Swedish Grand Prix but finally Britain has a premier class winner once again!



















The wrong gamble this time for Iannone but the Austrian GP vanquisher was still setting a decent pace in the lead until front tyre wear saw him drop back to eighth place; teammate Andrea Dovizioso fared worse and had to retire





John McPhee cuts through the Czech river on the Peugeot/Mahindra. The Scot claimed victory despite a fogging visor and some of the worst race conditions seen this season. A fantastic achievement









# THE UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD...

By David Emmett

**I**t has been an interesting few weeks in MotoGP. In fact, it has been an interesting season so far. In the two races since the summer break, we have had two new winners in Andrea Iannone and Cal Crutchlow. That brings the season total up to six winners overall, and three first time winners this year, including Jack Miller's victory at Assen. The last time that happened was in 2006, when Dani Pedrosa, Toni Elias and Troy Bayliss all won their first ever MotoGP race. There are more than a few parallels with the 2006 season this year.

Like 2006, this has been a very unusual campaign. The main culprit of this oddness is a combination of new tyres and weird weather, making planning and preparation something of a gamble. In the first part of the year, Michelin made major changes to their tyres, the design only really settling down after the series returned to Europe, and Le Mans. It has also rained a fair number of times, but only ever on race day. That has meant going into races not really knowing how the tyres will hold up, and whether the set-up the team have found will allow the tyre to last the distance.

Andrea Dovizioso expressed equal amounts of frustration and bemusement on Sunday night at Brno, after Cal Crutchlow had mastered difficult conditions to take his maiden win in MotoGP. "Many times this year riders make an important result because they did something strange," the Italian said. "So this is really unusual in MotoGP." Dovizioso was including his teammate in that statement, after Andrea Iannone had taken his first win in MotoGP at Austria, and Ducati's first win in MotoGP since Casey Stoner departed in 2010. At the Red Bull Ring, Iannone went with the soft tyres, gambling where everyone else went with the harder rubber. It

paid off – he had enough left over at the end of the race to put a move on Dovizioso and win.

At Brno, Crutchlow had gone with hard wet tyres, expecting the wet track to keep drying out, and for the hard wets to perform well enough for long enough to be a better bet than going with the soft wets and swapping to slicks once the track dried out. It was a solid gamble, given that the track never dried enough for anyone to risk going in for slicks. The only riders to do that – not by choice, but forced to once the soft wets started shedding rubber – found themselves lapping nearly 20 seconds a lap slower on intermediates. The riders on the hard tyres – Crutchlow, Loris Baz, Valentino Rossi, Eugene Laverty – had their bet pay off. As did riders like Marc Márquez and Hector Barbera, who nursed their soft wets home by actively seeking out wet track to cool their rubber.

Even Marc Márquez' win at the Sachsenring had been the result of a gamble. After going backwards in the early stages of the race, Márquez had been among the first riders to pit for slicks, betting that the German track would dry out quickly. A safe bet, given that there is only really one line around the Sachsenring, and the heavy traffic over it quickly dries the surface. Márquez had been a strong favourite to win in Germany, having claimed every race he has competed in at the track since 2010. This time, it was a combination of luck and judgement that brought him the win, rather than outright blistering speed. But they all count.

Is all this a bad thing? I don't think so. As in most sports, the key to motorcycle racing is attempting to control as many variables as possible, eliminating chance and putting the outcome of the race





into the hands of the rider. For factories and teams, that means endless hours of poring over data, checking the history at a particular track, matching it to the data from this year, and refining things that work ready for the upcoming race. The work of a MotoGP team is to hone the set-up of a bike to as fine a point as possible, giving the rider what they need to do their job. The rider's job is to win races, and to do that, they need as few distractions as possible.

The trouble is, this year we have a brand new tyre supplier who has been out of the series for the best part of eight years. Michelin are building tyres for bikes that are vastly different to the knife-edge corner speed machines of the 800cc era, the fatter litre bikes offering more grunt to allow a more point-and-shoot style. Horsepower is up by thirty or so ponies. Most intriguingly, the spec electronics have taken much of the tyre management away from the ECU, and put it back in the hands of the rider. In the past, engine maps would adjust continuously to tyre wear, placing a constant load on the tyres. The unified software of the spec ECU allows riders to select three different TC maps and three different engine braking maps. That means that the engine maps are never optimised for the tyres, always providing a little too much or a little too little traction control or engine braking, putting extra stress on the tyres.

Then there's the rain, an uncontrollable variable at the best of times. This year, the rain keeps falling on Sunday, giving little opportunity to test. Teams are having to take a stab at it, with the risk of sometimes getting it horribly wrong. Likewise, Michelin do not have a great deal of experience with MotoGP bikes in the wet, and are still in the

process of making big steps in their wet tyre development. At Brno, for example, riders avoided the hard wets because of their experience in Assen. A lot of riders had crashed using the hard wets in Holland, and they were not keen to repeat the experience in the Czech Republic.

Conditions changed between the morning and the afternoon at Brno as well. In the morning, the soft wets were struggling to get up to temperature with the amount of water on the track. In the afternoon, there was so little water than unless they were cosseted, the soft wets would self-destruct within a few laps. That's weather for you: predictably unpredictable.

Perhaps it is because this is an El Niño year that there have been so many wet races, and such a surprising range of temperatures. That certainly hasn't helped, but the biggest difference has been in the technical changes, which have left the teams devoid of data, and having to make educated guesses.

It has certainly made the racing unpredictable, and consequently quite exciting. I sometimes think that race weekends would be a good deal more interesting if teams turned up on Saturday night, qualified on Sunday morning, and raced on Sunday afternoon. No time to get the bike just right; the emphasis would shift towards managing what you have, rather than trying to create the ideal package. Commercially, it's probably a non-starter – who would buy expensive tickets for a show of just a single day? - but it would certainly be entertaining. Unpredictability is the great leveller in racing. May we have more of it...











# STATE OF PLAY...

By Gavin Emmett

**W**hen Cal Crutchlow flew back from Brno to the Isle of Man on his privately chartered jet alongside Jack Miller and his sidekick Bruce the bulldog, he could probably be forgiven for feeling rather pleased with himself. Without any doubt, the spiky Brit has had a month to remember.

After taking a combative second place in the German Grand Prix, he and wife Lucy welcomed his first child Willow into the world. That was followed up by a maiden grand prix victory in the Czech Republic, a win so historic that it could well have changed the future for British motorcycle racing.

Two months ago at the Dutch TT, the 30 year-old discussed his young pal Miller's first MotoGP win with a rueful smile on his face. "It's taken me six years and I still haven't won – and he's done it in his second year! But if there was any other guy I would want to win, except for myself of course, then it would be Jack."

Jack himself was ever so slightly less eloquent in his appraisal of Cal's success on Sunday after having tipped up his pal on the morning of the race, "I don't wanna sound cocky but hey told you so yeeww winner winner chicken dinner. Welcome to the club! 3 winners 4 races."

Bruce the bulldog declined to comment.

However, the most pertinent point in Mystic Miller's appraisal is the last bit. We have now had three new MotoGP winners in the last four races, with Andrea Iannone the third of those having taken long-awaited glory for Ducati a week earlier in Austria.

Apart from being the first British winner in the premier class since 1981, Crutchlow's victory on the LCR Honda also represented the second win this season for an independent team, and considering that before this year there hadn't been one since 2006, it is clear that something has changed this season in MotoGP.

Without a doubt luck has played its part, with tricky conditions to negotiate in Assen, Sachsenring and Brno, and the Red Bull Ring was a new addition to the calendar, ripe for Ducati to land on their feet. Let's also not forget that there have been several satellite team podiums in recent seasons – whether for Crutchlow or the likes of Smith, Petrucci, Redding and co. So the top step hasn't been that far away on occasion.

Despite all that you can't argue with the facts. The rules and conditions are the same for everybody, and arguably the factory teams have the resources to deal with those kinds of things better. There have been loads of mixed-condition races in the last ten years since Toni Elias' famous win in Estoril 2006, so to have two new privateer winners in the space of two months suggests this is different.

In my opinion the changes in electronic regulations and the change of tyre manufacturer has seen a closing of the gap at the elite level, and as such the Grand Prix Commission have delivered exactly what they promised. The factories still dominate in the main, but the opportunity for a lesser-funded squad to enjoy the odd success is there.

It might not last too long however, as the electronics are dialled in on a weekly basis and Michelin get a better handle on things. There were some critics of the French manufacturer on Sunday after





shocking images of Andrea Iannone's front tyre, which followed major issues for Dovizioso, Smith and Lorenzo. The latter was criticised in turn for his own performance, but the Spaniard had believed that the chunks of front tyre slapping against his fairing was the engine failing – hence his reticence to get back out on track with his first bike.

Michelin can't be blamed for Sunday however. They provided a front tyre that was capable of surviving the race, it's just that the majority didn't pick it. Teams were told before the race that the soft tyre was probably not going to reach the end – especially at Ducati – and most still took the decision because they expected to have to change bikes at some point.

Ducati did suffer, and I'm not sure how much of that is down to those oft-discussed winglets. The slight increase in front-end downforce they create may go some way to explaining why after having had four Ducatis in the top four after nine laps of the 22-lap race, it was Loris Baz who eventually finished best for them in fourth – the only other rider apart from Crutchlow to have gone with the hard front, hard rear combo.

As for the Brit's decision, it was a calculated bet. Similar to the one he took the evening before his first GP victory when he was railing vociferously against HRC about providing a bike which everyone could ride and not just Marc Marquez. Once again he went with his gut-feeling. If one thing has become clear over his 98 MotoGP races, then it's the fact that Cal has more guts than most. He might just have added more weight to his gutsy demands by becoming the sixth winner of this bizarre season.







# DEFEND YOUR VISION

**PROSPECT**

NO SHORTCUTS

—  
40 years of Goggle research and design have all led to the introduction of our newest and most advanced MX goggle to date. The SCOTT PROSPECT offers a Massive field of vision, 50mm Works Film Systems and our proprietary Lens Lock System, giving you the ability to focus on what matters.











WHAT IT TAKES: EUGENE LAVERTY

# WHAT IT TAKES

EUGENE LAVERTY TALKS MAKING  
AND STAYING THE COURSE AT THE  
VERY TOP OF MOTORCYCLE RACING

IS THERE A MOTORCYCLE RACER WITH MORE EXPERIENCE, VERSATILITY  
AND KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IT TAKES TO ADAPT AND PUSH BOUNDARIES  
AT THE VERY TOP LEVEL? WE SAT DOWN FOR A TEA, SOME CHOCOLATE  
AND A CHAT WITH EUGENE LAVERTY AS THE NORTHERN IRISHMAN  
CONTEMPLATES ANOTHER SHIFT IN HIS LANDSCAPE FOR THE FUTURE...

Words by Adam Wheeler  
Photos by CormacGP [www.cormacgp.com](http://www.cormacgp.com)





**ON** Friday at the Austrian round of MotoGP certain scenes on the media centre monitors caught a lot of people's attention. There was thirty year old Eugene Laverty angrily remonstrating and swapping a few choice words with 'The Maniac' himself Andrea Iannone after Free Practice2. "He has no respect for anybody," the normally placid Northern Irishman dead-panned later on. "I was doing my fastest lap and he had to overtake me. When I stopped he more or less told me I needed to get out of his way so then I said "What the fuck?! Are you kidding?!" He needs to have respect. This guy has been doing crazy things all year and that was the icing on the cake for me. For a guy that calls himself 'Crazy Joe' as soon as I raised my voice he rode away...he wasn't so crazy."

There was a consensual eyebrow raised at Laverty putting himself about. A winner and title contender in several series', highly rated as a

racer, rider and person; Eugene was not being pushed around, even in the midst of much speculation about his MotoGP future and an impending return to World Superbike.

Talking over a tea and several choices of chocolate in his motorhome later that weekend it was evident that '50' had quickly returned back to his unassuming and calm self but on raceday he'd get another dose of mistreatment from his peers with the fiercely apologetic Danilo Petrucci putting the Aspar Ducati man on the floor of the final corner. From the small time we've known Eugene it is clear that respect is a big issue for him; largely because he is as polite and respectful as they come. It does make you wonder how this Monaco-based athlete has carved such a diverse career at the very peak of road racing and amidst some heavy peer pressure with brothers like John and Michael also forging their own sizeable profiles in the sport.





Appreciative of the brew and hoping that Eugene was in a talkative mood we decided to chat away and buried forty minutes of conversation before utterly charming wife and chief champion of Eugene's career, Pippa, entered the cabin to remind us that Alpinestars' hospitality beckoned for the couple...

**Amidst the racing, testing, travelling and training do you ever get a moment to think 'where am I? How did I get here and where am I going?'**

I think it is important to take stock. I think you do every winter because it is hard in between races. It's funny how you go up through [your career] It happened from British Supersport and I never really stopped to take stock until probably 2013 in Superbikes because I was battling the same guys all the way through British Supersport, 250s and then guys and me and Cal [Crutchlow] were going at it in world superbike against Johnny [Rea] and

[Tom] Sykes and everybody. You don't stop to think because it's almost like the 'primary school, secondary school' thing. You're all progressing. When you're at a race, like when I used to come to a GP, you notice everything's big and there so many people. But when you're there as a rider you don't notice this so much. Friends are changing, but you're just doing your same thing. You've got your same schedule over the weekend. So it is easy to forget what you have because you're so focused on just going forward. Your 'schoolmates' are the same. They're all progressing with you. I try to take stock every so often because it's important to appreciate what you've got.

**Does a feeling of luck or privilege ever come into it?**

I think definitely 'privileged', that's something you have to remind yourself. I've almost had arguments with riders in the past when they admit our job is a tough one. I'm not buying that really. Every job is tough. It depends how you measure that, I guess. I always said I would probably be doing this as a hobby... but they pay me for it. This is my job and it's a more high-pressure situation but I'm still riding bikes for a living, so I can't complain. There are the risks and everything that goes with it, but I was aware of that before I signed up. So I don't like the people that complain about what they've got. I think you got to say that you're fortunate.

**Flipping that around...do you sometimes see things with your family or your friends or events that come up in life where you think: 'I only ride a motorcycle for a living...'**

It does sound strange... It was a few years ago - around 2013 - when I kind of stopped to think about where I was and what I was doing. What goes on inside your head is bizarre because before 2013 and 2014, I'd almost felt a bit guilty that I was doing this. I was just looking and thinking - exactly like you said - 'what am I doing? I'm not saving lives'. I'm riding bikes, people are paying to come see me, mechanics are working for my bike. It felt so strange thing until I had a conversation with Pippa and it was such a simple thing that she said:



“you’re an entertainer”. I was like, ‘s\*\*t, I’ve been thinking about that for six to nine months and it’s been bothering me’. I’d be there doing an interview in the Superbike paddock, in front of all these people and almost be feeling guilt. You almost feel like you’re kidding people because you’re getting away with doing this as a job. It’s a bizarre thing what can go on inside somebody’s head...but as soon as you voice it then it’s a reality check.

**Does that kind of thinking come up because of success or perhaps underachievement? Why does that guilt surface?**

I don’t know. I think it only happened that time because I hadn’t taken stock before and then suddenly racing was at a level where you’re getting well paid for it and people are paying to come see you. It was a strange thing to wonder about your place because I hadn’t changed from the ‘hobby mind’ to understanding that it really was my occupation. It’s such a stupid thing to think because you’re not saving lives, you’re not really doing something that’ll change the world but I like to watch TV, I like to watch supercross races and those guys [what they are doing] is what I understand. Even when you hear “you’re an entertainer” you’re like, okay, yeah, but what does he do? And then I realise I like watching supercross, so I would pay to go and watch those guys and that’s why fans come and pay to watch us. So I was like, okay, now I get it. I imagine everybody must have that kind of crossroads. Such a strange thing to look at I guess because we’re in a niche sport and of course there is a bigger picture of what’s going on in the world and all the rest...but then our job is to take people away from that because if you concentrate on all the negativity, then your 70-80 years on earth wouldn’t be enjoyable. It’s better to focus on the fun stuff.

**Bearing in mind what you just said about the guilt do you also sometimes feel that you don’t get the rewards for what you are putting in? The times when you think ‘I’m absolutely**

**busting my ass...’ or you are riding injured or flogging an uncompetitive bike? Do you feel like attention and recognition passes you by?**

Hmmm, no. We’re very privileged because not every kid has the opportunity to ride a motorbike. You’ve got to be thankful to your parents for giving you that chance; in my case I know I wouldn’t be in this position. We’re a small sport but we’re the best from the people who have tried it. I hate to see some kid out there with the potential to be great but who never had a chance to ride a motorbike. I’m not a fan of football, and we’ll say a lot of them are overpaid and how they present themselves isn’t always the best, but I think most kids on the face of this earth have tried to kick a football. So the guys that play football professionally really are the best of the best. That’s the other perspective. Are we really the best of the best here? The best of the guys that have had a chance to ride a motorbike? That’s the best way of looking at it.

**Are you an analytical guy? As a professional athlete I guess you have to be but can you get wrapped up in the whole mental side of it? Motocrossers mystify me because they deal with so many different things on a physical level as much as a mental one. They can hit some real depths when it comes to injuries and stuff. And then always have to come back up, always riding a lot. I just think the psyche of a top level racer is a curious thing...**

Maybe there’s something there because I’ve seen racers at championship level that come through with me and then something big has happened - like a big crash for them or a friend - and then they drop back and they say it’s not for them. So it is important, the mental side. That’s not to say that everybody is born tough. I wasn’t exactly a tough kid even when I had my first crash as I started road racing at fourteen. I remember it knocking the stuffing out of me and then putting me back a bit. Even the first ‘injury’ when I stubbed my thumb. It was like, ‘I’m not sure if I can ride and race, this is really hurting’. So that mentality does



WHAT IT TAKES: EUGENE LAVERTY





sometimes change and then years later when you're getting injections to race a few hours later I think that has to be something in your head that can be learned. I'm not sure. Maybe it's how you're brought up.

**Have you ever reached a point of performance where you wanted to tap into it more and thought 'if I try these techniques, or I read this book, or I talk to this person maybe it'll give me a bit of an edge?'**

I've always tried to learn by myself, tried to understand my own way of thinking and what works for me. A lot of riders like the old "I was unlucky." That annoys me, I never like to look at it like that. When something happens once, you can say unlucky. When it happens twice it's a bit of a trend. It happens a third time, look at yourself. Maybe there's something you're doing wrong. You can't always blame the other person. You got to look at your own psyche. It's so important. It's something I did this year. I was never a crasher but the last three years, especially even in the championship year when I was fighting for the [WorldSBK] title, most of my crashes were in the races. I was like, 'that's not on'. Most of them were in the early laps of races as well. So I made a conscious decision. I knew I had to change something. There's a lot you can do if you understand your own mind. I understood how I needed to be more settled and stop putting so much pressure on myself. I think I already put a lot of pressure on myself and my career means a lot to me but it's good that I hang around with some athletes in Monaco. For the first few times I thought, 'shit, some of these guys don't actually care about their career' and then I realized now they've got the balance right. When I was first there maybe the whole racing scene meant too much to me, and that's when you can self-implode. You often find the guys that are most successful are the ones that have something outside of their sport. Even like Lizzie [Armistead, fellow Monaco resident], I felt for her what was going on the last couple of weeks but she had the balance completely

right. Cycling is her job and she does it very well and prepares very well for it. She does her cycling but she's not a cyclist. She's her own person. That's something I learned from her even...but everybody's different. Someone like Rossi, I think Valentino lives to be a racer 24/7. It seems to work for him. But when it becomes 'your everything' I think that can be very dangerous.

**Is keeping motivation a fine line? Especially after a season like last year. We talked about it earlier; you're still doing your hobby but then also it must be hard to push yourself up and reach the peaks you want to reach...**

Not for me...never really. A bad race does get a little bit harder to deal with compared to a few bad hours during a good season. You mope for a day. I didn't like it. I was always moping for a few days, like in 2014 or something and then last year the same. But I was always self-motivated. Once I got over myself a bit and get back into my routine then it's just back to the same optimism as well. A thinking of: 'this is going to great'. You have to go at it like that... and you have to prepare the same if not better than you did the previous one. Once you start getting that in your head then results are going to go with it.





**You seem like a mellow kind of guy but was there a time where you had a bit of swagger? You had a little bit of the youthful arrogance or the exuberance?**

I think probably the closest I got to that was when I was in the Red Bull Rookies because then you're in a proper team and you're starting to win races and you're a teenager. During those years it [the attitude] does happen. But I think it's almost a good thing at that age because you need that. Boxers are the extreme. I don't think you can be a successful boxer without having that element of arrogance and really believing that you're going to kick the guy's ass. So to help me eventually go from British championship level to the world, you have to have that belief. But usually when most people grow up then they get a grip on themselves. Everybody goes through that stage during the teenage years.

**Professionally was there someone who had an influence on you? Someone that you thought, 'he's got a different idea there and it seems to work'. Did you kind of look outside of racing?**

My father...because of what he did for myself, Michael and John. We joked about it in the past with him because we became professionals by accident. My dad gave us this opportunity to ride bikes and he knew we loved it. But at the same time it was a strange thing. He was always like 'this isn't going to be an occupation, you're not going to make a career out of it' even when we started winning British Championship races and stuff. My brother Michael was the first one to say to him: "we can...here are the facts...I've spoke to some lawyers...we can." He wasn't a pushy dad and like 'this is going to be my kid's career.' He was actually just doing it for us as a hobby and was so self-motivated and never complained. He did the work to give us this opportunity. So I think I look a lot to my dad for that mentality of just getting on with things. People talk about struggling for motivation; I don't know how that can happen. You just got to think about what you've been given.



**You say he wasn't pushy...did that mean you could keep a cordial relationship?**

Yeah. I think some kids end up falling out with their dad - or something similar - as they become a professional. But for me, a lot of the motivation to get the results was because I knew he was our biggest supporter. He's always watching every session, every practice. He knows everything that's going on. So I like to be able to get good results because I know it pleases him too. That's something nice to give back to him.

**So part of the motivation when you were young was to make him happy or proud?**

I rode motocross as a kid and I didn't have that competitive edge because my dad didn't give me pressure; I know I could have done a lot better in motocross if he did. But at the same time it meant by the time I came to road racing then something just clicked and I wanted to win there. So in the end it turned out to be a good thing. I didn't even know what position I would finish in races and stuff. I remember doing some of the little interviews and they would say "where did you finish in the championship this year?" I was like "championship?" And the kid next to me would be like "I think he finished second"! I didn't know what a championship was and that's incredible in this day and age because that's the focus you need. But for us, like I said, my dad wanted to give us that opportunity and let us do our thing.



**What was it like growing up in that environment of brothers? You say racing wasn't based so much on competition but how did those first steps on bikes and in racing help form your character?**

We were six kids. I guess I didn't really have that competitive edge...but I think any kid when they win a race is going to be happy. I remember one race when I was like six years old or something. I passed a guy in the last corner and I was coming across the line. I lifted my hand up and put it straight back on the bar because I knew my mom would be watching. It sounds like a strange mentality but she wouldn't let us celebrate because she felt it was bad for the other kids. She didn't want to upset them. So I remember her seeing me and asking "did you punch the air?" and I was six years old and, of course, made up a story: "no, my hand slipped off the handlebar..." It was a very different upbringing to most but it made us respect our rivals that way. However it's something I had to change because you have to understand you can't have too much respect for your rivals, especially to a point where you don't want to celebrate! You got to celebrate your own success, otherwise you just become a bit of a robot.

**Do you ever imagine how would it have been growing up if you'd had a bit more of an arrogant aura? A bit more of a ruthless approach to racing...? That you weren't so nice...?**

Yeah, there are certain stages in my career where I think that could have helped, definitely. I've tried to adapt and change with it. On the personal side and the professional side, I've understood I had to change because otherwise people will walk over you. But like with Andrea [Iannone and their run-in during qualification at the Austrian Grand Prix] I don't let people get away with things anymore. On the flip side I always remember that it is important to have good personal relationships because if you split with teams or you're pushed aside for political reasons there's a good chance that they're going to be calling again. So you've got

to get the healthy balance and think of a positive atmosphere. But definitely, like you say, there's a time to be a bit ruthless on the professional side, that's for sure.



**Did it take some time to learn that? I see you want people to have a good impression of you but maybe sometimes you have to bang your fist on the table...**

It takes going through hard times in racing to get it out of you. In the Red Bull Rookies I was almost nurtured in that way. Things were fine and then I went into 250s. The teams I was there with really didn't 'get me' at all because they wouldn't see me on TV. They didn't understand that I was passing five guys in the first lap or something. They just saw my demeanour and thought 'he doesn't want it'. One of the guys actually told me: "it's like your par-



ents make you do it". It was such an insult and I could have just punched him. If it were now I probably would punch him! But that's history and with things like that you learn. As I went to World Supersport and Superbike the people saw me winning and saw that competitive edge and I didn't need to explain myself anymore. I did change a little bit but I still have that same quiet demeanour because that's what works for me. If I get revved up I get unsettled and make stupid mistakes like I have done in the races over the last few years by putting pressure on myself. So I need to be settled. I think Gigi Dall'Igna [Ducati Corse Head] is one of the best examples of someone that understands me because Gigi never once criticised me for any mistake or anything. I think he understood that I was always giving my all and my approach was professional. Even whenever I had to help Max [Biaggi] out in the championship in 2012 Gigi was very understanding. He was good to me in that way. As long as you're winning and people can see it, then the quiet demeanour isn't an issue. But whenever they can't see it then they might look at you in the box and think, 'he doesn't really give a sh\*\*.' Sometimes people have to see it in black and white. See you overtaking somebody on TV before they realize that you're riding your balls off. You often find the guys that are cocky and all show are the ones that have no chance. I've had teammates before and the ones that are cocky are the guys that fall apart just like a cheap watch, whereas the ones that are quiet and almost to the point where you'd say "he's not very confident" they're the ones that are consistent. The cocky ones go up and down. I think that's a big part of why we are successful from Northern Ireland...that it does help us.

**Do you think people underestimate or don't appreciate how tough or versatile you are? Maybe you don't get enough credit for what you can do and consistently kind of changing and morphing into different challenges with different bike...?**

Yeah, maybe, but I prefer not to sort of look back. I think every year shapes you and makes you better. That's the way you've got to look at it. I think I've got another eight to ten years that I'd like to be racing. Your path can always go different ways but I think whatever I'm doing next year, everything that's happened in these last couple of tough seasons will make me better than if I'd just had a few easy years. But it is funny that if I ever get pushed aside from teams then it's only afterwards that people say "s\*\*t, he was doing a good job..." It happened a few times with Aprilia when I got pushed out with Melandri. It's happened a few too many times. It's a bit silly. Maybe because I don't big up myself enough but I kind of cringe bigging myself up. I prefer just to get the results.

**One criticism I've heard of you is: 'he's too nice'. But some people might think, 'I'd rather be a fast nice guy than some twat who burns bright for a couple of years and then sinks...'**

You burn bridges and it's a pretty slippery slope on the way down. However I've learned on the professional side to be much harsher and not as trusting because of what happened in the last ten years, some different events. But there's no reason why you can't be a genuinely nice guy on the personal side.

**You said recently that this is a fantastic job but every twenty-four months you are unemployed. Does that crossroads sometimes get a little wearisome? Would it be reassuring just to have some longevity or some stability for a while?**

Yeah. I always push for two-year contracts because I realized that a one-year contract is actually a six-month contract. When I was first looking at coming to MotoGP - when I had a factory Ducati offer to come here in 2014 - we were talking about a two-year deal and even at that time I was like, "no, I want a one-year because of this and that. Who knows what could happen..." And then you realize two years is what you need to really focus on a project.



## FEATURE

**"I FIND IT HARD TO BE CONTENT. A NINTH PLACE IS GREAT AND IT'S NICE AT THE TIME BUT IT'S NOT COMING INTO A PODIUM CEREMONY AND SEEING ALL YOUR GUYS THAT WORKED HARD FOR YOU REALLY ENJOYING THAT SUCCESS WITH YOU. SO THAT'S STILL A CRAVING...I WOULD LIKE TO GET THAT FEELING BACK AGAIN..."**









To hear that somebody else is being considered for your seat after pre-season testing is not good for a rider's mentality. So I always like a two-year contract now. Any team manager that proposes a one-year contract doesn't understand a rider's mentality, I don't think.

**Do you think if you threw all your experience and hindsight at a fifteen-year-old Eugene Laverty would you have a clearer map of what to do and where to go?**

Yeah, definitely. Just simple things even in terms of riding, how to progress, because I didn't break it down as much then, didn't understand it. So that's something I would like to do with young riders in the future because I'm an analytical rider. Some guys aren't. They're just unable to understand what's happening. They're just using their God-given talent. So that's something I would like to do with fifteen-year-old me and some other kids. That would be nice. I think that's what happens with a lot of these kids, like Marquez, whereas the British riders take maybe a little bit longer. Imagine that help instead of having to go through the learning process yourself? There are so many simple things that a few days on track could really teach a kid that's showing potential.

**Do you sometimes ever watch races of yourself and think: 'Who is that guy? Is that really me? Did I really make those moves?'**

The main one that happened was at Jerez when I passed [Marco] Melandri because that was such a surreal experience. I would say I was on a different level mentally because of what happened. It all stemmed from the fact I knew Marco was taking my job for political reasons but then he showed me real disrespect. I was debriefing with my guys on Friday at Jerez and he come into the box do the photographs for the contract. I was furious at that. So then in the race, fighting for the lead, he did a typical Marco move and pushed me off the track with a lap and a half to go. Two corners later I was trying to catch him and made a mistake and he got away again. I was like, 'okay, I'm go-

ing to have to calm down for the next lap and a quarter or whatever to reel him in'. And I only just got with him for the last corner and had one chance at it. That moment was incredible; just how quickly I was able to think about what was going on. I even used some inside curve in the fast right and I could sense that he was going to go left and it seems really slow, but it isn't slow there! It's happening in a split second. So I knew to go right. I'd never given it a thought before but I knew how to pass him on the outside. I knew that I would have to fly past him and really then squeeze the brakes afterwards. So all that was going on in a split second and I managed to do it. Afterwards I was thinking, 's\*\*t, something crazy was going on in my head there'. But there was a lot behind it; a lot of rage and a lot of issues I suppose. So it worked out that time. But like I had said at the time, I was passing him no matter what. I was going to ride through him if I needed to. Normally a racer doesn't think like that because you have to be calm but with everything that had gone on I just had to beat him there. So that's probably why I was thinking ten times faster than normal.

**For the experience that you've accumulated you must know how to handle any given race situation. Everything works instinctively. It makes me wonder how you continue to learn and keep getting better. How is that possible? Is it a mental thing again? Just overcoming obstacles?**

Confidence is such a big thing in our game. Fighting for race wins is always different; it doesn't matter what anybody says. What you're going to do for a first place compared to a tenth place is quite different. 2013 was the last time I was consistently battling for race wins. It was a nice year because I wouldn't plan what lap I'd pass people or even where or what corner and I would always pull it off, which I don't think a lot of riders can do. Every time when I watch those races back from that year I'm like, yeah, that was my approach and it was nice.



**From your skill set, what's your biggest asset as a racer? Do you have a very acute sensitivity on the bike? Are your margins for being able to make a step very short and quick?**

I'm not one of these guys with incredible raw talent. For me, it's the analytical side. That's where I always break it down. I think that's my biggest strength because I understand everything that's going on and that's why I can be quite consistent. I don't have these ups-and-downs of riders that ride on confidence and then they have an off-day because they don't know what's happening. So that's my biggest strength...but I think it can also be a big weakness because you can over-analyse things, so you have to get a balance. One theory that I have is that when an athlete or rider is at the top of their game then their biggest strength is their biggest weakness. I think they're one-in-the-same because you generally work on all your weak points. That's how you progress. You see it with Marc Marquez. His biggest strength last year was his biggest weakness: the fact that he only knew to win. He would give it all to win but then he ended up crashing a few times with it. Lorenzo's biggest strength is his biggest weakness in that he needs a clear track. He can go when nobody can challenge, but that's also his weakness because he can't battle with guys. I think that's kind of how you can understand the guys at the top: whenever their biggest strength and biggest weakness is one in the same.

**Some of the guys in the press from Ireland say that your profile back home has never been bigger. Do you feel that? With all the adversity of being in MotoGP and some of the struggles and the uphill moments do you still feel that it's been an invaluable experience?**

It has. Definitely on the riding side my profile has got bigger for sure and that's been nice but on the riding side GP has been such a good test. Unfortunately I've ridden some donkeys in 250s but give a rider something like that and they'll figure out the fastest way. You start looking inside yourself whereas whenever

you're fighting for a championship or fighting for race wins you can't change too much because you need to keep on that flow. In the past it's almost been like 'schooling' where I was looking inside myself to improve, even those little one percents. [A challenge] Always makes me stronger. We'll see what next year brings. Hopefully I will get to see if I can put what I've been through to good use.





**Was a title always the thing on the horizon? The ultimate aim? When it comes to the future - the next three or four years - do you have to be realistic about your goals or are there other priorities?**

I think I really miss battling for wins. I find it hard to be content. A ninth place is great and it's nice at the time but it's not coming into a podium ceremony and seeing all your guys that worked hard for you really enjoying that success with you. So that's still a craving and something I've missed the last few years. That's why I have such a passion for the sport. I would like to get that feeling back again. Some guys are different. I think a lot of guys in this paddock are happy being in that mid-field and when they sign a contract knowing that the results are only going to be 'whatever' and the best you can do is a tenth or the best you can do is an eighth if it's a wet race or something. I'm not really a guy that's content with that. When I came to GP I was hoping the open Honda was going to be all that it was promised. It was a bit of a disappointment but I signed a two-year contract because it was something to get under the factory Honda [umbrella]. It then became the Ducati. It's been a step-up in the bike and I've wanted to step up again next year and that's kind of the stumbling block where I'm at right now. My teammate next year would have a GP16 and I have a GP15. I don't see progress in that. I need to be stepping up or stepping across to be winning again.

**You're definitely not happy to be just one of these guys who says "I'm part of the GP pack. I'm a MotoGP rider"...**

No, I never came here for that. I think there are different kinds of riders. I came here because I wanted to race against the best in the world. I think honestly the three best riders in the

world are here but unfortunately I'm not really racing against them, am I? I'm racing with them on the same track but if you're not on the same machinery then you're not getting to do that. I really wanted to have a shot at those guys to see how I stack up, but unless you've got similar machinery how are you going to make up half a second or three quarters of a second a lap on a guy that is already perhaps the best rider in the world?

**Does it bother you that if you made the return to Superbike next year, two years, three years' time, that the Brit-centric emphasis of that series is something that might swallow you up? It's a case of going into 'a pack'...almost like it would be for a young Spaniard here...**

No, that doesn't concern me. I think it's something for the organizers and it would help if there were differently nationalities at the front but it doesn't matter where the guys are from. If the guy is fast, I got to beat him. It doesn't matter what his nationality is, really.

**You mentioned helping young riders. Have you thought about that? I guess with Pippa you make plans as a family but can you see a life after what you're doing now?**


Yeah, I'm starting to think more about it because a few years ago I had no idea! I was like, 'what am I going to do?' Because it's hard to know. I'm starting to think more in that way because, like you said, what are your strengths? You've got to use them. There have been some riders that didn't make it but they're incredibly good in the media, commentary or even could become a really great journalist. So you've got to work on what your strengths are. I think my strength is that I understand everything that I'm doing and everything I have done to progress. So I'd like to pass that on to a young rider one day perhaps.



WHAT IT TAKES: EUGENE LAVERTY





A close-up, low-angle shot of a red motorcycle's handlebars and engine area. The motorcycle is in motion, with a blurred background of a cloudy sky. The handlebars are white with black grips, and the engine cover is red with the word 'REIKON' in white. The overall tone is dynamic and high-tech.

# JOHNNY RIDES LEATT

## GPX 6.5 CARBON HELMET

360 TURBINE TECHNOLOGY:

UP TO 30% REDUCTION OF HEAD IMPACT AT CONCUSSION LEVEL

UP TO 40% REDUCTION OF ROTATIONAL ACCELERATION TO HEAD AND BRAIN

LEATT ATHLETE: JOHNNY AUBERT





**LEATTI**





## TRIUMPH

Summer can be a bit hit-and-miss in the UK but this week much of the UK is set to swelter for what could be the last throes of the August/September says of sun. A ripe time to consider some iconic motorcycling t-shirts and with the excellent quality and fetching design of Triumph's range of clothing more than appropriate. Priced at a fairly reasonable 28 pounds and featuring a 100% cotton construction here is a smattering of the brand's latest wares that can be found at dealers, through their ordering system or simply through the website.

For a list of dealers and to see the complete collection online, visit:  
[www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk](http://www.triumphmotorcycles.co.uk)









KYLE WYMAN

- BEST TECHNOLOGY - BEST PERFORMANCE - B

6D's revolutionary patented Omni-Directional Suspension technology is a fully active in-helmet suspen

system that reduces both angular acceleration and linear acco

Learn more at [6Dhelmets.com](http://6Dhelmets.com) **SAFETY ABOVE ALL ELSE**

Exceeds: US DOT FMVSS 218 (US) ECE 22.05 (47 Countries World-Wide) / AU 1698 (Australi







**SAFETY  
ABOVE ALL ELSE.**

ATS-1 Carbon

**BEST PROTECTION**

ension and kinetic energy management  
eleration energy transfer to the brain.

a) / NFL Head Health Challenge III Award Winner

**G.D.**  
**HELMETS**  
Advanced Impact Defense



**D** **FEATURE**

# MORE BLURRY ORANGES

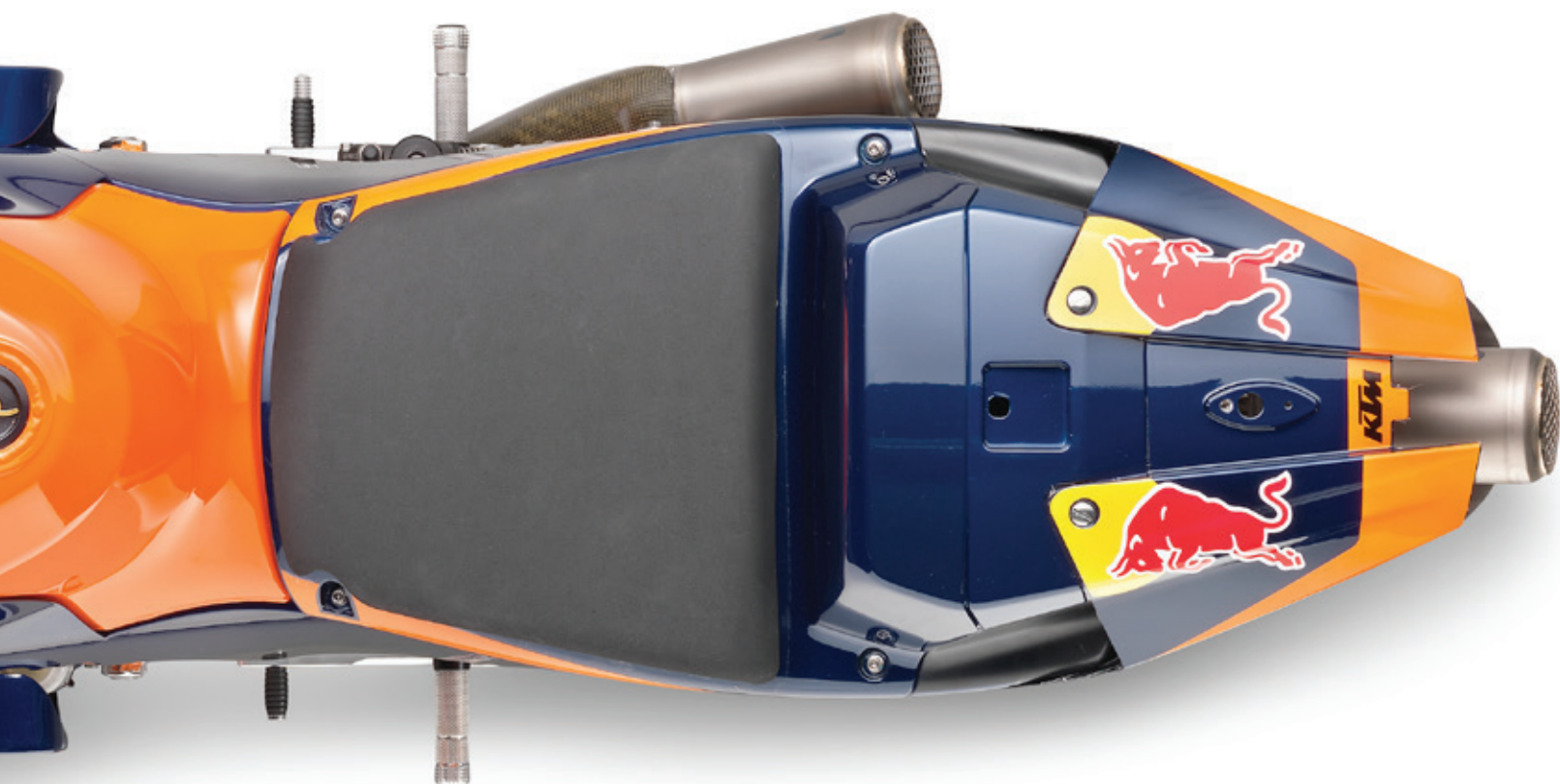






Words by Adam Wheeler  
Photos by CormacGP/KTM

AT A VERY RED BULL ORIENTATED TENTH GRAND PRIX OF THE MOTO GP SEASON KTM SPLASHED THEIR ORANGE COLOUR OVER A LARGE PORTION OF THE FIRST AUSTRIAN ROUND FOR NINETEEN YEARS. A LARGE DEDICATED GRANDSTAND WAS JUST ONE VISUAL ASPECT AS THEY ALSO TOASTED THEIR PART IN A DECADE OF THE RED BULL ROOKIES CUP AND THEN MADE THE OFFICIAL UNVEILING OF THEIR SPECTACULAR RC16 RACEBIKE. HERE IS WHAT WAS ASKED AND WHAT WAS SAID AT SPIELBERG...





**A**lex Hofmann is doing a good job as a host. A few half-decent jokes and some interesting questions to KTM CEO Stefan Pierer, Sports Director Pit Beirer and Dorna CEO Carmelo Ezpeleta – not forgetting figures like Vice President of Onroad Mike Leitner, principal test rider Mika Kallio (the Finn making the factory's very first MotoGP appearance at Valencia in November) and technician Sebastian Risse (substituting for Chief Designer Kurt Trieb) – means the former racer and the very first rider to make laps in earnest on the sleek RC16 in 2015 is keeping a captive audience at Spielberg.

The unveiling of the bike itself is not a major deal; the RC16 is already familiar through its participation at the test around the same Austrian facility a few weeks before the Grand Prix. The Red Bull colours are prevalent in Moto3 and saturated in the Red Bull Rookies Cup and the MotoGP machine falls very much into line aesthetically. Risse is quick to claim however that the form of the present machine on stage could morph. "Sometimes the bike is changing, even day to day but the line is getting clearer," he says. "It means in Valencia and Qatar you will not see the same bike, that's for sure but I'm happy with the path it is on."

Risse was coy on renowned journalist Mike Scott's probes for the crank direction of the seamless shifting V4 powerplant that has already impressed the riders and other company on track. "It is a hot topic at the moment and we don't want to reveal that information. We were doing some analysis and evaluations."

"I had the feeling that the base is good and the lap-time was on a good level but we could improve things and went step by step," reveals Kallio. "I think at Spielberg [test] it was nice to see that all the hard work people had done was on a high level. I don't think there are any big things [needed to change] and we are close

to our competitors and have to improve the parameters. The best point is the engine. It is very powerful. We need to improve a little bit the feeling of riding and turning in the corners and something on the exit but these are normal things for a new project. I would say that the engine is good on this bike and the rest is coming. Let's see what happens in Valencia."

There was also some explanation around the RC's partial tubular chassis and how elements of Trieb's first attempt at a MotoGP engine at the beginning of the century (KTM's ill-fated bid to enter the class) transitioned into the new model. "The Chief Designer of that engine Kurt Trieb - in '02-'03 – made the first version and it was powerful but some items were missing," evaluates Pierer. "Kurt made his masterpiece and it will become a benchmark. He also did the Moto3 engine. Engine-wise we are very experienced and we know what we are doing. I am not over-confident [generally] but in that I am very confident. For sure there is some carry-over and the concept is a V4 but the angle is slightly different."

"The bike is completely new but the valve train worked well on the old engine so we took information over and saved some loops," comments Risse. "We have been doing Superbike and Moto3 projects and Superbike is more applicable for the chassis while Moto3 is more for engine and all together brought this bike up."

"We have a lot of experience with tubular frames and we can get an advantage from this," he continues. "There is also the manufacturing and the design for manufacture because aluminium and steel both have different challenges. One thing that we learned in the past is that the steel frame is quick to modify and update and to make the loops in development a bit quicker than aluminium."











A week earlier, at the Swiss round of MXGP, we had already asked Pit Beirer about what the Red Bull Ring unveiling and explanation will mean to him. The German essentially had to create an entire MotoGP structure from a set of budget approval sheets and the movement even accelerated plans for a brand new workshop a few kilometres from Mattighofen in Munderfing. "For sure it will be an emotional moment because when you make the decision to start a project like this then you are in a small room with a couple of people," he said at Frauenfeld. "If it is a motorsport subject then everybody looks at me and the question comes: 'Pit, can we manage that or not?' For me it was a clear 'yes' but then you start to have some sleepless nights! Seeing that we managed to have two complete crews and four bikes there ready to go and with lap-times that are quite promising and two good riders under contract and we show our race colours for the first time; it is an emotional and proud moment."

"Almost two and a half years ago we made our decision – when we reached number one in Europe – to make the last step," comments Pierer on the reasoning behind becoming the sixth factory in MotoGP. "We are the leading brand in off-road and fifteen years ago we decided to go on-road and now we are selling more than 60% of the 200,000 bikes on the street. To get accepted around the world then you need to enter MotoGP; the Formula 1 of motorcycle racing. It is the right time. Racing is our philosophy, our driving force and motivation. For sure we are making a learning curve when we go into a segment but we will reach the podium...and the dream of my life is to be world champion in MotoGP."

"If you want to become a serious global player in the motorcycling industry then you have to be in the premier class that is MotoGP," he adds. "It is not just marketing it also technology and what gets handed over to the pro-

duction bike eventually. Competition is our primary force and it is what keeps you alive and what is driving more than five thousand people."

"We are not famous for giving up. MotoGP is also a base to become number three in the world. This year we are reaching 200,000 and the goal then is 300,000. We are doing more than 50% of our sales outside of Europe; where we are number one. We are present everywhere."

"We started to talk at the Grand Prix of Qatar in 2014 and we had a meeting with Pit Beirer asking to be the supplier of the Moto2 engine," recounts Ezpeleta. "We explained that the place to be was in MotoGP and it was not difficult to convince them because the spirit of competition is in the heart of KTM. Now we have the balance between European and Japanese manufacturers and KTM have proved their sporting capabilities in all the other activities in which they take part. I am sure with the way they do things there will be a very big success and it will be an important step for us [MotoGP]."

"We have a professional testing structure so we have two crews ready to race already," said Beirer, expanding on some of the specifics. "The race team is already in place and we could go testing consistently with two riders because we had enough bikes and material and good, strong engines that didn't break so we could do laps, laps and laps and gather a lot. We went to many different kinds of tracks to get experience. We had smaller riders and taller riders and many things. Qatar is just around the corner: Valencia is our wild-card GP and we have four more tests in place. From our tests at Spielberg we could see that we are not too far away. We have a good time schedule so no need for a crazy panic but Qatar is our goal and to be ready for there and we are on schedule."



With a pyramid now in road racing with the RC390 Cup, the youth of the Red Bull Rookies on RC250s, Aki Ajo bringing success and prestige in Moto3, a WP/KTM chassis collusion for Moto2 from 2017 (with competitive times set already in tests from Ricky Cardus and Julian Simon at the bars) and now MotoGP, KTM are laying down a potent path in the discipline.

“We hate to ‘lose’ riders for whatever reason,” says Beirer. “We’ve had the Rookies Cup for ten years now and together with Red Bull have produced many fantastic riders for the paddock. For us the line finished in Moto3 and it was so hard to let some of the kids go, so we decided for a Moto2 project to go in the gap and I have to thank Aki for the fantastic job he does for us. Our dream is that one day we start with a kid in the Rookies Cup and then up to the MotoGP bike.”



“At the beginning I was unsold on Moto2 but I can see how it is important for development of GP riders and so it is another cost control,” said the ever-frank Pierer. “It is cheaper than Moto3 I can tell you! As a manufacturer I don’t have a problem with the engine and if another competitor is in. You can see the difference in chassis and setting. I’m in favour of Moto2 but not in favour of presenting an engine [in the future]. Even though we are a successful company we are also a small one compared to our competitors.”

Before group photos wound-up proceedings (until the bikes made a few demo laps before the MotoGP race on Sunday) there was the question of whether the RC16 would ever spawn a road going version. The days of the iconic RC8 and KTM’s first Superbike seem to be numbered...don’t expect an update any time soon. “There is no plan to build a Superbike again,” says Pierer. “A bike like the RC16 with 270 horses should go closed-course. We will offer a replica [of the RC16] very soon at a feasible price for the KTM customer to have a real race feeling but such a bike I think is not right for the road. Safety is one of the biggest threats and issues in the motorcycle industry and as a manufacturer we have to take it very seriously.”

Ever since KTM announced their dabble with MotoGP, and even back to their foray in Moto3 in 2011 where they won the at the first try and have owned two of the four crowns so far, there has been scepticism about the spread of their resources for racing. Amazing success in motocross, supercross, enduro and rally has gone hand-in-hand with exponential growth in sales and model development and KTM are allegedly set for a bumper 2017 in terms of machine releases. The 300k barrier is firmly in sight but will it come at a cost? Will the orange wilt in classes where they have made such a mark? Pierer was quick to reassure.





“That was the concern of our customers fifteen years ago; that we are going on-road and leaving our off-road roots,” he said. “In specific classes it takes a very long time to be successful. In Dakar we started almost twenty years ago and for the last fifteen years we are dominating: we don’t leave that because it is very important. It took more than a decade to become Supercross champion in the States and we will do it in the same style here. We won’t give up.”



The words and feelings of determination seem to accompany the pride on display for KTM at Spielberg and Pierer was visibly moved as he sat next to the RC16. Although they were not present (naturally) the wave of optimism can only be encouraging for Bradley Smith and Pol Espargaro who will only have to wait until the Monday after Valencia for their turn to blip the throttle on the Austrian’s freshest adventure.





2017 Evolution 2.0 MX Gear

# GET DIALED IN



Precision Fit Custom Comfort With Smooth, Even Closure and No Pressure Points

Once Locked In - Stays Locked In

PERSONALIZED  
COMFORT ZONE

Fast, On-The-Fly Micro Adjustability

ON-THE-FLY  
SECURE FIT  
PRECISION  
DURABLE  
CONVENIENCE  
COMFORT  
LIGHTWEIGHT  
PERFORMANCE



PUSH TO ENGAGE



TURN TO TIGHTEN



PULL TO RELEASE

MICRO-ADJUSTABILITY BOA REELS OFFER INFINITE DEGREES OF FINE TUNING

THE ONLY MX PANT BOA® CLOSURE SYSTEM



See the full line of 2017 MX gear at [FLYRACING.COM](http://FLYRACING.COM)





## JOIN THE EVOLUTION

The 2017 FLY Racing Evolution 2.0 MX gear features the only MX pant with an integrated Boa® closure system in the industry. This revolutionary system offers fast, on-the-fly micro adjustability with a truly "Dialed In" fit. A simple turn of the dial delivers unparalleled performance, comfort and convenience.









# PROTAPER

A few useful items from ProTaper's catalogue of accessories and first up is the 'revolutionary' **tie-down** that is one of the company's best sellers and for good reason. The product 'incorporates a spring loaded, swivel carabiner base hook that will prevent the straps from ever getting twisted or coming un-hooked in hard-to-reach places.' At just 35 dollars this is a sound investment in getting a bike, gear, bicycles or anything that needs to be hauled safely secure. The tie-down features: the patent pending swivel carabiner base hook, long and wide, 84"x1.5" nylon webbing, 1200 lb. of straight tension strength, industrial strength non-slip cam buckle, velcro secured strap ends and a soft handlebar strap.



For 50 dollars the ProTaper **wireless hour metre** permits monitoring of maintenance intervals and eliminates guesswork on when to service your motorcycle. The Americans state: 'Simple and user friendly design employs wireless, peel and stick installation, and uses vibration sensing technology to track the life of your motorcycle. Fully sealed housing to withstand the elements and zip-tie grooves for added install security.' The full run-down of specs includes: an easy to read display, small and lightweight construction, up to 999.5 total engine hour count (not resettable), up to 999.5 partial engine hour count (resettable), an IP68 resistant plastic case, CE certified, a three year lifespan and double sided tape included.



To see more simply hit the URL:  
[www.protaper.com/default/throttle-tubes.html](http://www.protaper.com/default/throttle-tubes.html)



# **//ALL FUNCTION NO FRICTION**

## **BALL BEARING TWISTER THROTTLE TUBE**

ProTaper's Twister Throttle Tube is constructed from quality anodized billet aluminum. The sealed radial ball bearing and polymer bushing allow for consistent and smooth throttle operation while a knurled grip mounting area ensures a viselike grip bond. ProTaper Twister Throttle Tubes are used by top-level pro teams and riders worldwide.



**POLYMER BUSHING FOR  
CONSISTENT AND SMOOTH  
THROTTLE OPERATION**

**SEALED RADIAL BALL BEARING  
PROVIDES EFFORTLESS THROTTLE  
TWIST ACTION**



[WWW.PROTAPER.COM](http://WWW.PROTAPER.COM)  
[@PROTAPERUSA](https://twitter.com/PROTAPERUSA)





ZACH OSBORNE

**PROTAPER®**



# AMA-MX

## BUDDS CREEK NATIONAL

BUDDS CREEK, MD • AUGUST 20th • Rnd 11

450MX winner: Ken Roczen, Suzuki (Champion)

250MX winner: Cooper Webb, Yamaha (Champion)

THE PENULTIMATE ROUND OF THE LUCAS OIL AMA PRO NATIONAL SERIES SAW KEN ROCZEN STAMP HIS SEAL ON THE COOLING WAX OF A FAIRLY STRAIGHTFORWARD SECOND CHAMPIONSHIP TERM. THE GERMAN FACED THE ODD THREAT FROM ELI TOMAC ONCE PRINCIPAL RIVAL RYAN DUNGEY WAS DISCOUNTED THROUGH INJURY BUT WAS OTHERWISE JOGGING TO A FOURTH MAJOR CAREER TITLE BY THE AGE OF 22. AT BUDDS CREEK IN MARYLAND '94' MADE HIS SECOND SHUT-OUT IN A ROW AS COOPER WEBB POCKETED HIS VERY FIRST MOTOCROSS GONG

# KING KENNY AGAIN

By Steve Matthes  
Photos by Simon Cudby









**T**here's still one race left here in America but two new champions are already crowned. Nothing like wrapping things up early right? For Yamalube Star Yamaha's Cooper Webb and RCH Suzuki's Ken Roczen the long wait of the summer has been lifted. Both riders walked to their championships with big leads and the inevitable became reality at Budds Creek, Maryland.

16, 52, 16 and 20. Those are the amount of seconds that Ken Roczen won the last four motos by. And those 16's were a lot bigger before he slowed late to no doubt conserve energy for the second races. It hasn't been easy for Roczen at Unadilla and now at Budds Creek but it sure looked like it. Roczen's stand up style, lugging the motor and keeping his momentum up were put to use at the rutty Unadilla and the off-camber/hill circuit of Budds Creek. 'On another level' would be a phrase that would be appropriate here.

It's Roczen's second 450MX title over here to go with his MX2 World Championship and his 250SX ones in the smaller classes. Only the big one (450SX) remains for the 94 to capture. Yeah the 450MX class was hit with injury hard this year but Ken was beating everyone (including Red Bull KTM's Ryan Dungey) rather easily as one by one others dropped out. Monster Energy Kawasaki's Eli Tomac took three motos this year (and two overalls) but more often than not, Eli was closer to third place than he was to first. What juxtaposition from the first five 450MX motos last year when Tomac handled Roczen although to be fair Ken was battling a back injury. Or what about the previous year in 250's when Tomac, locked in a championship battle with Roczen, captured the second half races on his way to the title? Who would have predicated that two years later it would be all Roczen, all the time?

And just like the year he won the first title on a KTM, Roczen is taking the number one plate to a new team as he's moving over to Honda for

2017 and beyond. A private team, RCH Suzuki, showed that it can win with a top level rider but is now left with nothing but memories of the fabulous summer of '16. When the calendar rolls to 2017, the German will be on his third OEM in six years over here and for someone as elite as Kenny, that's certainly a little different.



Ever since Roczen left the services of super trainer Aldon Baker, we've been watching to see if Kenny's desire to have more fun, work less (but still work hard) would pay off. The first three series, although there were wins, showed that maybe that wasn't the best decision as Baker disciplined Dungey won all three series. But a different Ken showed up this summer, someone who started riding better late into the supercross term. Right from the first motocross gate drop, the #94 was the best rider without a doubt. Roczen says he's a better motocross rider than supercross and that might be up for debate until Hangtown started. From then on there was no doubting that we were witnessing an ass-kicking that we hadn't seen since Dungey's rookie year in the 450 class and before that, Roczen's team owner, Ricky Carmichael.







“There were four people that thought it was a good idea, and about twenty important people that thought it wasn’t. So I just told them, look, I’m not backing out”. That’s Cooper Webb explaining his wrist injury suffered near the end of supercross that had most of us “experts” thinking it was going to hold him out of the 250MX class. Webb knew he was moving up to 450’s and had one more kick at the cat for the one title that had eluded him and wrist injury be dammed, he was going after it. Not practicing early on hurt him as his second motos suffered but he just needed to get to the first break in the calendar to heal the, ahem, ‘break’ and come out swinging.

Monster Pro Circuit’s Joey Savatgy took control of the series early and DNF’s by defending champion Jeremy Martin as well as his brother Alex gave Savatgy some breathing room. It all changed at Red Bud when Savatgy jumped a little far into a corner and went over the bars. That crash out changed the course of Savatgy’s season as he was never that good again as well as Jeremy Martin never really getting going due to his team squabbles, his fitness and probably some more issues.

Webb started slowly then just gained momentum to the point where he was made the podium in nine straight motos with five wins thrown in there. A season that gave us Alex Martin winning overalls and racking up podium after podium (Alex is a six year pro that until last year had never even come close to a podium) and Zach Osborne finally breaking through for his first moto win and overall was full of surprises both good and bad but in the end, hard to not say the best rider has won.

If he was healthy, Webb winning the 250MX title wouldn’t be a surprise at all as him or Jeremy Martin are the two best outdoor riders we’ve had over here. But the injury changed everything. In the end Webb walked to the title

and perhaps that’s the biggest surprise of all, that it kind of came easily for the #17. Even with just two podiums in the first five motos of the year.

Webb’s an elite, special talent and we’ll hopefully get to see him match up with Jeffrey Herlings at the Charlotte USGP in two weeks. Then it’s up to 450 class for Coop alongside Chad Reed in 2017. Savatgy, the Martin brothers, Osborne will all be back in 250’s in ’17 to get another go.

So as I said, one more race in the motocross series this year with nothing but some pride on the line. Next year we’ll see Webb lining up against the #94 along with Dungey and Tomac which should be some great racing. But then again that’s what we said about this summer and our two champions made sure that wasn’t the case.

\*\*\*

After Budds I headed up to my Motherland Canada to catch the Walton Trans-Can race, which is a meeting at the end of the countries national series that had some different formats and big purse money. Walton was a series-ending staple in Canadian motocross for a long, long time but politics with the CRMC (the sanctioning body of Canada) got in the way and the national was taken away. The Lee family circled the wagons, got some great sponsors and put up a bounty for the Superfinal which combined the top MX2 and MX1 riders.

The pro rider turnout wasn’t great but that was more due to injuries to Mike Alessi, Davi Millsaps, Vince Friese, Colton Facciotti, Jeremy Medaglia and a few others weren’t able to make it. Millsaps teammate Kaven Benoit won both the MX1 and Superfinal with ease and took the big money home. The Canadian series is in a bit of a transition right now as it





looks for the next home grown star. Facciotti has been the guy but last few years he's been injured and is getting older. Millsaps, Brett Metcalfe, Matt Goerke have all headed north and won the title the last few years. It's great to see some 'name' riders up there but to me the series needs a homegrown hero or two to keep the interest up. If USA-based riders that can't win in America come up and continue to take titles I think the series will lose a bit of its lustre. Nothing gets people going like national pride. There are some younger Canadian riders that could possibly be up to the task but they're in MX2 right now and it'll be a few years.

Great to see Walton putting on another first class race and I think there's potential for this race to stand alone as an "outlaw" race if the CMRC doesn't want to come to its senses.







Zach Osborne has been around the world and back in search of motocross spoils and in Maryland became one of the few professionals to have won both an AMA national and a Grand Prix



AMA MX BUDD'S CREEK



A fighting second place for Justin Barcia who will undoubtedly have a busy programme once the Nationals have finished









Yet another 450MX podium finish for Marvin Musquin in his first season (left). Gareth Swanepoel was a hard-working and articulate member of the Grand Prix paddock and is making serious headway in the USA as a trainer/mentor; Cooper Webb his most high-profile collaboration to-date (above, left)





PIONS







## CLASSIFICATION & AMA CHAMPIONSHIP

### 450MX OVERALL RESULT

#### Riders

1	Ken Roczen, GER	Suzuki
2	Justin Barcia, USA	Yamaha
3	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM
4	Eli Tomac, USA	Kawasaki
5	Phil Nicoletti, USA	Yamaha

### 250MX OVERALL RESULT

#### Riders

1	Zach Osborne, USA	Husqvarna
2	Alex Martin, USA	Yamaha
3	Austin Forkner, USA	Kawasaki
4	Adam Cianciarulo, USA	Kawasaki
5	Cooper Webb, USA	Yamaha

### 450MX STANDINGS AFTER 11 OF 12 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Ken Roczen (c)	534
2 Eli Tomac	458
3 Marvin Musquin	365
4 Justin Barcia	316
5 Christophe Pourcel	217

### 250MX STANDINGS AFTER 11 OF 12 ROUNDS

Riders	Points
1 Cooper Webb	457
2 Alex Martin	384
3 Joey Savatgy	361
4 Austin Forkner	331
5 Jeremy Martin	321



# PULPING THE CALENDAR...

By Steve Matthes

The end of the American racing season is here. Or is it? There's only one round of the Lucas Pro Motocross Championships left this weekend in Indiana but the season is far from over for many riders. One week after the American MX finale, there are two weeks of USGP's in Charlotte and Glen Helen, a week off and then the Motocross des Nations. If you're not racing any of those then you have a week break before the shiny new SMX Cup in Germany, a sort of MXDN for the OEM's. After that it's the Monster Energy Cup [MEC] back here in America followed straight away by the Red Bull Straight Rhythm. Then...some rest. Unless you're trying to make some cash by racing the Arnhem Supercross, or Lille Supercross. Perhaps it's the Geneva Supercross in the beginning of December that you're committed to.

Before you know it, it's Anaheim one in Southern California and the treadmill starts all over again.

And I, for one, think all this is a terrible idea. The giant treadmill I spoke of doesn't just run on sun. Nope, it runs on the backs of riders and teams. And many times, the cost to keep it going are bones and ligaments as rider after rider gets caught up in "the machine" and leaves broken, battered and waiting for another chance. Out of the top twenty riders at Hangtown in the 450MX class, just 11 were still racing twelve rounds later. An almost 50% attrition rate for 12 races is not so good right?

There's a tug-of-war going on in American motocross right now and plenty of teams and riders I speak of aren't very happy at being in the middle. The 'ask' is to basically risk being chewed up by the treadmill for little stake. Look, I love the MXGP series, I've made many trips overseas to watch them (along with the MXDN's) and enjoy my time over there as well as have many friends among the journalists, teams and riders but for the life of me I don't understand Youthstream's

push to have GP's in the USA. The riders in the GP's are great, most of the tracks are great and you just have to watch the last few des Nations to understand that we've come full circle, the GP riders just might be better at motocross than their red, white and blue counterparts. Just like it was in the 1970's. I'm just trying to get all this out of the way before I dive into why we don't need USGP's here.

I understand their point of view that it's a world series and therefore you have to go around "the world" but we over here have a very full calendar of races. The American teams, just like the European teams and Japanese teams, get a budget to race and represent their sponsors in their respective series/countries. Monster Energy made a big grab at titling the MXGP series to increase their exposure. Great work but they certainly don't need to be any more "exposed" in America where the green claw is seemingly everywhere in motorcycling racing. When talking to USA teams many of them say that they're not paid or budgeted to race in other countries and series. There's plenty of kicking and screaming at heading north of the border for one round of supercross and although I'm Canadian and love going there, I get it.

For Monster or sponsors or other OEMs to push so very hard (to the point of strong sources telling me that they are paying opposing riders to contest the USGPs) for its riders and teams to race both USGP's is, to me, just 'going to the well' too many times. Sure, Kawasaki's Eli Tomac will get his regular race win bonuses but his massive team that works hours and hours to get ready for both of them, get nothing. The team people, of which I was a member of for eleven years, work harder than anyone really know. They have families that have barely seen them for 29 weeks and we're adding two, three, maybe four races and some of those that include overseas travel to the list?





The race has cost Team USA the services of Tomac (another weird thing is the MXDN is a Monster event) and no one I have spoke to, be it rider or team member, wants to race these USGP's. Red Bull KTM's Ryan Dungey said 'no' to the MXDN but he's been pushed into racing the SMX Cup in Germany because it's important to KTM. I'd look for a lot of "injuries" to strike a few of the riders that are slated for these extra races.

As I said above, you can only push these athletes so hard before we start losing them either to injury or in the case of the very elite, retirement. Ryan Villopoto certainly had a lot of racing left in him but he took a look at his bank account, looked at what he had to do and said peace out everyone. This isn't a good thing.

I've been covering the American series since 1996 and I can say that without a doubt, the 17 race Supercross series and 12 race Motocross series is more than enough for the riders and teams over here. Throw in the MXDN and the MEC and we're good. Besides, jumping into two races of another series makes no sense and in a way is a bit of a slap in the face to the riders that are going for points in that series. The teams work too hard for the races that matter, the riders can't seem to last in the two series that we do have. In the end, they'll be lots of money made for the promoters, OEM's or energy drinks with all these extra events but very little of it going to the right people, the ones that put on the show. It'll be interesting to see what happens in the years to come and which entity wins out as I do think change is coming to American supercross/motocross. But for now I say enough is enough and I know I'm not alone in this opinion.





### MSR

A slightly different take on footpegs thanks to the Malcolm Smith Racing Collection. The Californian firm state that: 'Malcolm Smith Racing pegs feature an exclusive arched cleat design to provide for better positioning and enhanced control. Further improving feel and control are the 55mm wide foot beds and aggressive cleats to keep the riders feet firmly planted at all times.'

'The corrosion-resistant stainless steel construction ensures that these pegs will last a full Six Days, if not the lifetime of your bike.'

Most sets are priced at 110 dollars and feature: stainless steel cast construction resists rust and corrosion for added life and durability, exclusive camber/arched cleat design aids in enhanced rider positioning and control, a 55mm wide platform provides for comfort and control, aggressive peaked cleat pattern keeps rider firmly planted in all weather conditions without tearing up the soles of your boots, open flow-thru design keeps mud and rocks from building up, 13mm (1/2 ") rear offset for larger feet or to achieve a more rearward position

For more information have a look at the website here:  
[www.msrracing.com/hard-parts/controls/foot-controls/footpegs.html](http://www.msrracing.com/hard-parts/controls/foot-controls/footpegs.html)















MXGP COMEBACK: JAKE NICHOLLS

# THE WILL THE WAY:

**HOW JAKE NICHOLLS ROSE AGAIN...**

TEAM TURMOIL AND A RETURN TO FORM FROM SOME OF THE DARKEST VOIDS A PROFESSIONAL SPORTSMAN CAN ENTER: THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT JAKE NICHOLLS AND HITACHI CONSTRUCTION HUSQVARNA ARE THE STORY OF THE YEAR SO FAR. HERE IS THE INSIDE LINE...

Words by Adam Wheeler  
Photos by Ray Archer



**L**ike most sports motocross is littered with tales of comeback and frequent chuckles in the face of adversity. The nature of the MX beast dictates that even the most skilled and prolific of champions will, at some point, need a grave face-to-face session with a doctor. Many make it back from a bleak diagnosis, many don't. Some get the wheels turning... but not at the same frantic rate as perhaps a career peak that might have lasted weeks, months or years.

In 2016 Jake Nicholls has reached the top of the British Championship podium and re-established some Grand Prix credentials after a period of eighteen months and three injuries that left the 26 year old at a professional and personal low; a threshold where the towel was poised to be chuckled. The fact that '45' has climbed back to recognition and defied a mangled finger, sore broken arm and painful lower back – not to mention all the anguish of losing status, a saddle, a reasonable contract and a wealth of confidence – means he is already one of the splendid narratives of British off-road motorcycle sport this year. Nicholls may come from a very supportive and well-resourced family but this personal struggle - to paraphrase the late, great American writer Norman Mailer – has been like 'sprinting up a hill of pillows'.

Rejuvenation and renaissance is not limited solely to athletes. When it comes to the Nicholls saga then there is Hitachi Construction Husqvarna; British Champions the last two years and the UK's top team in MXGP. Roger Magee's outfit suffered a double blow with the loss of Shaun Simpson and backing from KTM at the end of 2015. Ailing like a wounded beast with fractures right through the infrastructure of the squad (Magee also dealing with family bereavement) the team and Nicholls found the other just when each party needed a little something: Magee required both a prominent British name and revalidation for continuing the racing effort through the upheaval of switching brands and Nicholls came across a

sympathetic figure in his former team (three years in MX2 before switching to Jacky Martens' set-up for his best years in GP in 2012 and 2013) as well as one of the few avenues that did not prioritise mining the Nicholls family funds in order for Jake to rediscover if he still had what it took.

"Jake wasn't a risk," asserts Magee, speaking at the recent British Grand Prix. "Jake left us on very good terms and he was a lot younger then and just coming into MX2. We had seen the potential and with Jacky Martens he was able to get on the podium. We know his work ethic is very strong and we don't have to tell him what to do because he knows what he wants. He lost his way a wee bit in the last years by trying to come back too early from a couple of bad injuries. Like with some other riders we've picked up in the past – where people think they are on the scrapheap – we can still see their potential and desire. We took the chance and it has worked out."

Nicholls wasn't on his own while wading through insecurity, anaesthesia and depressingly slow initial lap-times while trying to see if the bars would still go where he wanted. "He has definitely gone through the worst I have seen and he is slowly coming back up," confides wife Blu. "He got to such a low point with the injuries that he was debating whether to quit. I always said I'd support him with everything...but I did not want him to quit because I didn't feel it was his time to do that. A few people said "maybe you should..." but I knew deep down he didn't want to. So I backed him 110% so he'd carry on, and as hard as it was we'd do it. Thankfully he did and is slowly getting better."

Spiral fractures, breakages and concussions are just some of Nicholls' heavy costs for a career in motocross that reached Grand Prix while he was still a teenager. "I'd grown up with injuries and just when I'd turned Pro I started a really good run and pretty much forgot about it [the rigmarole] and lost my name



**MXGP COMEBACK: JAKE NICHOLLS**





for being the ‘injury boy’,” he says. Nicholls blossomed in MX2 and reached the top five on Magee’s privateer bike when the class was far busier with competition boasting podium-and-winning experience (there are only two riders in the 2016 MX2 crop who have owned a Grand Prix). On the Martens KTM he lived on the periphery of the rostrum, tasted champagne at Matterley, finished fourth in the world and then arrived to the age of 23 and a forced move into the MXGP class for 2014.

That’s when things started to fall away. Nicholls showed signs of quick adaption on Steve Turner’s Forkrent KTM 450 until the fifth round of the British Championship at Whitby in July where an accident led to a badly crushed little finger on his right hand that ended his season and gave concern that he might lose the digit altogether. “I had a good four-five years of no stress at all,” he recollects. “The finger was a freak thing and I was ‘down’ about that because I was confident in my racing at the time and had come from a strong MX2 period. I had not set the world alight on a 450 but I was coming strong. I was gutted but then I hadn’t been injured for a while and thought ‘OK, I have to go through this’. It wasn’t a bad [injury] but a complicated one.”

With Steven Frossard as a high-profile (but ill-fated) teammate for 2015 Nicholls regrouped and attacked his training with verve, only to suffer a snapped arm at the first meeting of the year at LaCapelle Marival in France. The video of the crash still makes for unpleasant viewing. “I made a bad decision to ride a 350 for 2015 and didn’t get much confidence on that,” he reflects. “I didn’t look into it properly and just assumed I’d be OK when I started racing. I broke my arm in the very first race and I thought ‘whoah’...it went from being bad to really bad. The whole thing went on for ages and I was really down because it didn’t feel like it was getting better. I felt like everything was slipping away: my form had totally gone, my confidence had gone completely as well. I was

a different person because of that. Very unmotivated and there were times when aside from doing the work I had to do around the bike, training or rehab I didn’t want to do anything else. We were in the middle of buying a house and I just switched off from that. It changed me.”

“When I came back from the wrist I rode at the Swedish GP that summer and had a fifteenth, which was alright and I thought ‘I can chip away from here’ but then at the next round in Latvia I had a crash that wasn’t bad but it resulted in the back injury,” he continues. “To be honest from all the injuries I’ve had that is the one that has really stayed with me and always will. It is a stress fracture. The way it was explained to me is that your back is like a brain and once something happens then it ‘remembers’. I had slightly worsened a stress fracture I’d suffered when I was nine – it is quite impressive how they can tell that from a CT scan – and again it took ages; another two-three months before I could ride properly.”

It was another spell of uncertainty and frustration for Nicholls who was on the verge of losing his ride and all the good work of the Martens MX2 years. Racing stands still for nobody. “I had pretty much given up on it all by then,” he admits. “I just tried to stay fit. I came back in the British Championship at the end of 2015 and I was struggling to get in the top seven and I felt like I was trying harder than ever. I was pretty depressed about that. I was trying so hard and had given myself a month of good, hard preparation and still I was way-off some guys I had been beating by forty seconds the previous season. I then had a massive crash in the last moto of that event – the last of the year – and it just summed up that eighteen month period.”

“I left there questioning everything,” he adds. “I had no offers at all [for the next season]. It was such a difficult time I almost had to laugh at it. It was so ridiculous how bad everything





## MXGP COMEBACK: JAKE NICHOLLS

had gone. I always find it hard to take when you try so hard and then nothing works out. I can take the misfortune if I wasn't putting anything 'in'. All the time I was injured I refused to go to work with my Dad or put loads of effort into our house because I was still 100% into what I was doing."

Caught in a situation between offering encouragement and also co-bearing the pain and disillusionment at home meant that Blu was also seeing the worst motocross has to offer. "Jake can get in a real rut where he sits and does nothing," she says. "There were people suggesting that he'd earn more doing something else but I know Jake and we'd have long conversations where I knew it was not in his heart or his character to quit. He is not a quitter at all and works so, so hard – like they [the riders] all do – and we stuck together, even if it meant starting again right at the bottom. I knew he wasn't at the end of his career and he would have always thought 'what if..?' if he had

stopped. Their careers are not long and injuries have such an impact but I knew Jake had to be the one to say 'that's enough'."

Before 2016 would start to offer some light (and simultaneously show Nicholls that racing was not the utter bedrock of his existence) there was the matter of the route back and the motivation – the 'why' – to even restart his desire to motocross at the highest level once more.

Jake is propped on the edge of the sofa within the team's truck. It is touching thirty-five degrees outside at the Mantova circuit for the Grand Prix of Lombardia. He is in good spirits and is typically talkative and articulate. I get the feeling he hasn't verbalised too much the emotional or psychological extent of the effect of the last eighteen months. It is certainly our first interview in a while.



**I can remember your excitement about your first proper contract a few years ago and then you built up to that high level in MX2...so was it a bit hard to see how much the sport can leave you behind?**

It was really scary to be honest and very disheartening. I'd had a good couple of years in MX2 and coming to MXGP I had to take a contract dip because I was coming into a class that was stacked. Then, all of a sudden, at the end of last year I was hearing things like 'we want 50k or you cannot come racing'. It was like 'wow'. I'd just signed up for a massive mortgage on my house and it was just really sad. I felt let-down because I'd come from those positions in MX2 and then I was back to being seventeenth and maybe having to pay to ride. I think a fair bit of it has been down to the fact that Dad had sponsored my racing and so people immediately looked at that. Which is why I cut all ties with him when it comes to my racing. It is quite horrible because all he wants to do is help and he is such a generous person. For me to have to tell him at the start of this year "you're not sponsoring my racing..." was one of the hardest things. He was gutted. I am one of the most appreciative people when it comes to receiving any help. I felt like such a brat and it was really strange. I had mum crying saying "I don't understand you..." So it was a bizarre moment but eventually something clicked and they totally understood and it was the biggest relief ever. This was all in January this year. It was difficult for Roger to get the team going and I didn't know if it was going to happen until January. Dad wanted to get involved to help things along and I basically had to say to him "no, if the team doesn't happen until August then leave it...I have to do this by myself". People had always looked at him for money because he had always sponsored the sport.

**It must have been an unusual time to keep harmony with people around you that wanted the best but also wondered what the next move should be...**

Yes, I think one part of them really respected that I wanted to try and carry on because the injuries were pretty bad and took forever [to heal] but then you could almost sense that they were seeing that it [his career] was slipping away as well. When I did a couple of British Championships last year and had results outside of the top five you could see them saying "well done" but also thinking 'what's going on?' They were really supportive and never gave me any negative vibes but I could see and feel it. It was strange. Through this winter I changed things and got a trainer for the first time-

**Why?**

To do something different. The last two years went so badly that I just needed to do things in another way. Keep things fresh.

**You mixed things up before though, trips to New Zealand and so on...**

Yeah, I'd done that in the past and actually went again this year because they seemed to lead to good seasons! It helped me get away from the slump. My pre-season training started in November and I didn't have a ride until December and then whether it would happen or not. It was demotivating and strangely motivating at the same time.

**Did you have a Plan B? Did you think 'I can be a Grand Prix winning Enduro rider'? Or did you think about dipping into Arenacross? Or even something far-out like Rally?**

The only thing that crossed my mind was that if I didn't get into a Grand Prix team this year then I would have got a couple of sponsors together, bought a couple of bikes and done the British Championship as an aside to working. I would have seen where that takes me and - as bad as it sounds - made myself available for any replacement rides. Obviously I would not have set up the year for that but it was a contingency. I actually got offered a British



Championship ride quite early on but didn't take it because I wanted to do Grands Prix. For a while it was up in the air and then that British Championship option expired and then I was like 'whoah; I don't have anything...'. You always think 'well, I can do 'this or that' as a back-up' but I didn't have anything.

**People dipping into this story might be curious as to why you have pushed to come back and why also prioritise Grand Prix; after all it is a series that can bring more personal reward than financial...**

It would have been easy to get a normal job and race on the weekends and I have experienced a bit of that and it is far easier than what I am doing now. But that was the easy option and I didn't want it. I have been so close to the top end of the sport and I know what it is like and I love it there. I want to be back there. I obviously have some confidence somewhere that I can do it again because I would not be doing this otherwise. As you say there is not loads I can get out of it [being a Grand Prix rider]. I'm in the fortunate situation where Dad runs a decent business and part of me thinks I am wasting these years by not picking up some education there with him. But it is not my passion and he understands that and I'm addicted to this. I guess it is just determination; I have not thought about it too much...but I suppose I felt I can get back to where I am now and then go forward again. I know I can go forward steadily if I keep on working hard...and I must have known that deep-down.

**You mentioned confidence a moment ago but how did you get that back? Was it through laps on the bike? Or dreaming of Matterley in 2013?**

I don't get confidence back until 'it' happens. I'm quite a laid back person normally and can be quite happy about the unknown. Coming into the first races I didn't know where I would be, what I could do and even 'if' I could still do it. Honestly it has only been in the last couple of months where I have realised that I can still


do this. I felt good when I was riding the bike but it is hard for me because I am not amazing in practice. I don't get on a practice track and light the world up and think 'yeah, I'm good'. I rode with Tommy [Searle] a couple of times before the flyaways and I was going alright but for me to get confidence I have to be there, do it and see it. Deep-down I know I am a hard racer and if people are in front of me then I will try as hard as I can to get on the back of them...and knowing that, I guessed it would bring me back to the level I know I can be. I was pretty sure that when I got into the race then I would build-up. That's how I work and I always believe I'm fit enough so if I can get myself into a good position then I will hold onto it.









A blurred action shot of motocross riders on a dirt track. The riders are wearing colorful gear and helmets, and their motorcycles are kicking up a cloud of dust. The background is out of focus, showing trees and a fence.

**MXGP COMEBACK: JAKE NICHOLLS**

**“I KEPT TELLING MYSELF I WASN’T  
FAR AWAY...EVEN AT THE RACES  
WHERE I KNEW I WAS...”**



**What about a level of satisfaction? There is the testing, the team, the results and the performances – normal racing – but then you're coming from those repeated setbacks...**

Honestly there is nothing better. The one result that stands out for me as being the first 'moment' was the qualification race in Spain where I got a seventh and I was sixth for the whole race. I came across the line and couldn't help laughing. It was almost like a 'f\*\*k you'. I understand that motocross is a business and it is not a hobby at this level but I laughed because I had no support from anywhere other than close people. I was sort of 'forgotten'. So running in that position was the best feeling ever. And you forget about the shit times instantly. They are so far behind you that you don't even think about it until someone comes up to you and says 'fair play, you have come back from a long way' and I'll think 'have I?' Sometimes I'll think 'well, I haven't done that well...' I would rather have been closer to the top ten at Valkenswaard but when I look at the names I am up against then it makes those words "you've come back good" hit home a bit more. At Matterley Basin this year the first race was horrible, the bike didn't feel good and I didn't enjoy it. I came over the line and was like 'bah...' and then during the week I had messages like 'what was it like racing Chad Reed for half the moto?' And 'you nearly got your first top ten' and then you think 'ah!'. As a racer you tend to look at other – weak - parts of what you do and I'm happy that I am like that because it's how you get better. You cannot be happy with what you have...but then you can also take a minute to be happy coming back from proper crap.

Roger Magee wears the same black polo shirt – almost uniform – but the logo is now white compared to the KTM orange his race team had worn from 2008 to 2015. The past two years have also been full of trials and tribulation for the Northern Irishman. His squad has often veered between trying to help and promote young talent (Simpson, Nicholls, Watson, Dunn, Irwin, Kane) and offer a lifeline to riders who - for one reason or another – were being left behind by the manufacturers (Simpson and Nicholls again, Sword, Strijbos).



The drift away from KTM (and thus Simpson who'd won the Dutch Grand Prix on the works 450SX-F and deputised admirably for the factory with their Red Bull representatives on the sidelines) was also compounded by numerous technical failures in MX2 for Ben Watson in 2015. The strange truth is that while the season was arguably the most successful in the team's twelve year history it was also its most turbulent and Magee had to enter a late period of negotiations and talks to emerge in Husqvarna colours, without '24' and with a semblance of ambition for 2016.



"We'd done a really good job for KTM since 2008," he explains. "We'd bought them ten British Championships, two fourth places in the world, a couple of Grand Prix wins and podiums and unfortunately they decided to go with another team; that is the way of the world. We had a look around and saw that Husqvarna was probably the best option. They wanted to grow the brand, certainly in the UK. We were a bit late coming to the table with the deal and it has been difficult in the first part of the season but now we're settled and certainly with Jake coming back on song we're going in the right direction."

The loss of the 'Simpson core' meant reorganisation and the transition seems to be working. "We try to look at the individual riders and see where we can help them and give them the right structure," Magee explains. "The same structure doesn't work for every rider and that's what we have learnt over the years. What worked with Shaun in the past worked for him again. What worked with Strijbos and Stephen Sword was also OK. Some riders like to keep themselves to themselves, others like to be integrated fully into the team and we like that family atmosphere. We've made some mistakes and we're not perfect but by-and-large we have got it fairly right. All the guys are really motivated behind Jake this year and he is reciprocating with some results now so it is a win-win situation. He has been helping take the awning up and down and likes the banter among the mechanics."

The grim irony for Magee, Nicholls and the team is that injury still pervades the scene and the badly broken foot for Watson means their MX2 programme has been non-existent and the recently-turned-nineteen year old is coping with his own level of bitter disappointment in

effectively missing an entire competitive term to recover. "I had so many setbacks in my first year and more bike failings than I could cope with," he lamented. "I had learnt a lot and I was ready for this season. I was more frustrated than anything that it ended so soon."

Watson crashed at the Grand Prix of Argentina clipping a double and also took a blow to the head. He faced the bizarre situation of having to use Google translate to talk with local doctors about the broken bones in his foot but it was a comprehensive scan on his arrival back in the UK that revealed a cracked navicular. The fracture required a 'bridge' implant that the youngster should have had removed by the time of going to print.

"Everybody is asking me at the moment 'when are you going to be back?'. Some people know that this happens to all riders and you can come back the next year better than ever," he says. "It is the first time I have ever been out for over three weeks and the first bone I have broken apart from my collarbone; my first serious injury. I know when I get on a bike it will all be back to normal."

"I've just had my nineteenth birthday so I am young in the class but it is gutting to think I would have had two full seasons before turning twenty," he adds. "You cannot buy experience. It is something that happens to all riders so you have to stay positive and just get on with it."

In a parallel to Nicholls, Watson also talks about the abrupt change a rider faces when race meetings are suddenly scrapped from the agenda. "It has been strange because you disrupt the everyday routine so much; you are normally training, running, cycling or just do-



ing something,” he reveals. “There was not a thing I could do after the operation apart from sit on the sofa. I had to have my foot elevated otherwise it just started pounding. I had to have it up to get the swelling down. Mentally the main thing was realising how much you love what you do and it actually becomes hard to watch. There was a lot of time to think. Even going to watch Nathan – even if he is in Enduro – and somewhere that people are riding is hard. It is going to make me hungrier when I come back.”

With the FC250 largely dormant the team are still fairly prominent in the MXGP class thanks to Nicholls and it is clear that ‘HCH’ have hit a functional level of harmony. It is one that could continue for 2017. “We have a one year contract but it is working out both sides and it is my view that you don’t break a winning team so we need to find the ways to improve,” Magee states. “We know if someone came along with a factory cheque book and Jake was getting results to attract attention we probably wouldn’t be able to match it but Hitachi like that bit of loyalty and we are trying to repay that. We get a lot of guests at each of the GPs and a lot of good feedback. It has to be a two-way street for sponsorship. With Ben we are open to all possibilities. Maybe we could run two MXGP riders and one in MX2 or have the mix that we had this year.”

How Husqvarna can step up to the plate further for ’17 will also play a role. “It’s still the beginning of the relationship but we have learned a lot through the KTM years and have a lot of strong partners both technical and sponsorship thanks to Hitachi, Revo and all the guys that have stood by us,” Magee concludes. “We are happy we bought them some success but at the moment with budget limitations we

can only do what we can. No satellite team can take on a factory team because of resources but we do the best we can.”

Back at Mantova and Nicholls duly the credits his environment...



**So for this season of recovery and consolidation are you pretty happy? Relieved? Re-energised?**

The year was a real fresh start with a new bike, an ‘old-but-new’ team and I honestly just wanted to get through a few races without getting injured...and it was like that for ages. Through March, April and May it was: ‘just try and get through them’ because I hadn’t had that run of competing for a long time. It sounds bad but there was a time where on Sunday nights I was relieved I had got through the races...but the last couple of months I have been fighting for good results. Being at that sharp end has been good fun. I really like the team as well. I like that everyone feels involved and I feel that they appreciate it when I really try. I’ll get a twentieth in the second race in Spain after coming back from a crash and they’ll be just as happy as when I’ve taken seventh in a qualifying race and I like that. It is what I needed this year.



If I was on a team that wanted a top ten and when I didn't get it then heads would drop then I think that would have been a bit tough for me. Everyone is appreciative of a bit of effort and then the British Championship win at Desertmartin was the team's home race. It has been a fun season so far and I like the atmosphere.

**Can you dare to dream again Jake? Can you touch top eight, seven, six in MXGP – that is still a very hard class to conquer – or is it still a bit early to say or tempt fate?**

At the minute I am just sticking with the top ten. I just want to be there and that's my goal at the moment because it seemed so far away at the start of the year. Someone the other day said to me "you can win the British Championship..." but my goal is just to get in the top three. That was all I wanted, and again it seemed so far at the end of last year. I don't want to move the goalposts so far but what you say is 100% in my thoughts. If I can come from the shit that I've had to the top ten of the world championship then I'm sure I can push on again with the same amount of work and better material. It is definitely possible. I would say where I have come from to here is a much harder than now pushing forwards a little bit more.

**The cliché is that a period of adversity is character-building but if you could go back to your 12-13 year old self and say 'this is what you'll have to go through in this sport...' does it widen your eyes a little?**

100%. If I went back and saw myself as a twelve year old....although to be honest I'd had quite a bit of shit already by that point! I was dealing with it quite well...I still wouldn't say 'no, this isn't for me...'. I think things like the adversity makes you who you are. It has made

me grow up and appreciate successful people and people who work hard. I have a wider understanding of things. If you are a rider who is always on top then I think it is hard to appreciate the success. When you see people who have been injured and come back – in any type of sport or a business that has gone to shit and been built back up – then you can appreciate the mental side of it. Pain is pain and it a massive part of it but mentally coming back from a setback is really tougher. For me there was a lot of pain involved but I am proud in what I have overcome and the risks I can now take again without a thought. You do forget how many risks you have to take to be at this level and for the first few GPs I'd forgotten how hard it was on the body, just physical wear-and-tear and I'm proud to overcome that and the whole fear side of it. I wouldn't change anything.











**The way you can compartmentalise the pain, a lot of frustration and ignore emotions around you from your family and then jump over those mental hurdles to aim for the top ten again in MXGP: it seems like a long ol' way...**

It was hard to overcome it all but honestly I didn't think too much into it because when I do that it tends to go wrong!

**An example?**

If I sat there and thought about all that had happened in the last year and a half before the start of a moto then I'd probably have a steady start to the race! I can be a relaxed person but also quite fiery when I want to be. I had to use all those types of things and patience was a massive thing. When you are sat there in October and November and nobody believes in you and they saying "f\*\*king hell; what are you doing?" then you just have to bottle it up. It is difficult. There must have been something in me – just memories I think – where I thought 'I've been on a Grand Prix podium so how is it possible two years later to not even get anywhere close?' I simplified it in my brain that I can do it again and just needed a bit of a run and once I was in the top fifteen then I knew I could go forward and forward to where I am now. I would then have to re-group and try and take the next step again. I just needed a sensible run and that applied to the training as well. Training smarter also gave me confidence and helped.

With time ticking until the first moto in Italy Nicholls departs to make a final look on bike prep and check goggles in the back of the race-truck; a small corner he has inhabited this season rather than trailing a camper to all events. A week later and he starred with Simpson and Searle again at Leuchars in Scotland for the fifth round of the British series. The re-emergence vaults on for '45'. Not only is it reassuring that one of the country's premier racers is back on the map but it is also encouraging that a sport that can be cruel to the point of tragedy can also provide heart-warming and inspiring moments. Perhaps it is all part of the strong allure of going fast on a dirt bike.



## **PRO CIRCUIT**

For 110 dollars Pro Circuit are offering their new Launch Control device for the 2017 KX250F. Their promo material states: '[the unit] Allows riders to compress the forks several inches while seated on the bike to allow more load on the front wheel for better starts. Putting more weight on front of the bike lessens the chance of a wheelie out of the starting gate.'

Pro Circuit Launch Controls feature a springless design that provides positive engagement and consistent release and the start trigger design helps simplify the installation of the entire kit. All Launch Controls are CNC-machined exclusively from aircraft grade aluminum and are a lightweight improvement to every racer's bike.'

Another addition to 'PC's vast accessory arsenal and easily found via their website or a (recommended) trip to their Corona workshop.

[www.procircuit.com](http://www.procircuit.com)











TEST



A photograph of a motorcycle's front end, including the headlight, fork, and spoked wheel, parked on a gravel path. In the background, there are snow-capped mountains under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

MOTO GUZZI STORNELLO

# RIGHT TIME RIGHT FACE

By Roland Brown  
Photos by Adam Bolton

MOTO GUZZI'S DESIGNERS AND PRODUCT PLANNERS MUST BE LOVING WAY THE MOTORCYCLE MARKET HAS MOVED IN THEIR DIRECTION OF LATE. AFTER MANY YEARS WHEN THE FOCUS WAS ON INCREASING PERFORMANCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SUDDENLY MUCH OF THE TALK IS OF RIDER-FRIENDLY ROADSTERS WITH A RETRO THEME AND POTENTIAL FOR CUSTOMISING. IDEALLY WITH A CHUNKY OFF-ROAD IMAGE, AS HIGHLIGHTED BY POPULAR SCRAMBLER MODELS FROM DUCATI, TRIUMPH AND MOST RECENTLY BMW. THIS TREND HAS ALREADY PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF GUZZI...



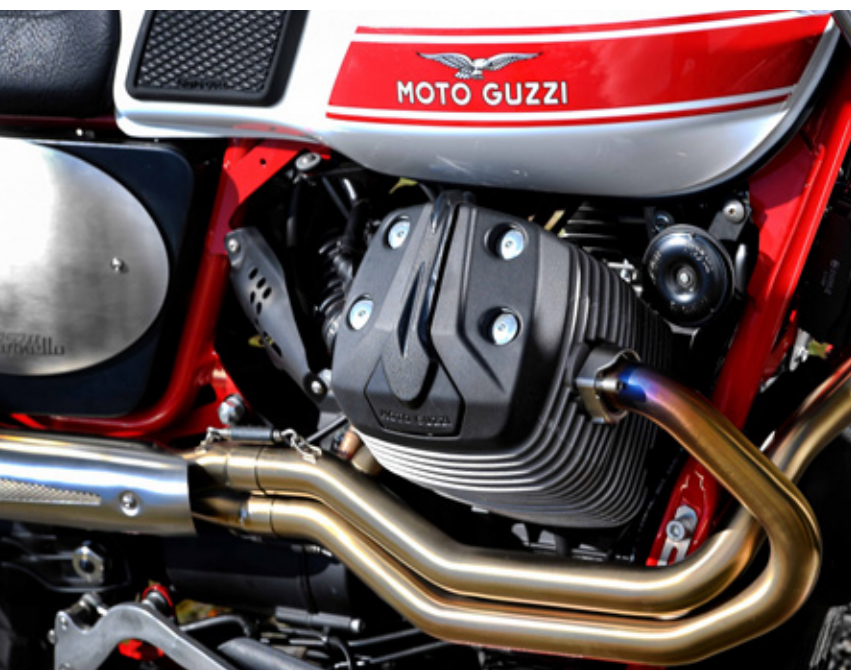
The company's traditional aircooled V-twins couldn't compete on power or tech, but whose recently revamped V7 II trio of 744cc roadsters have been a success thanks to their softly tuned retro charm. Now the Italian firm has taken the obvious next step by expanding the family with an off-road styled derivative, the Stornello.

This might not be a particularly imaginative move, but at least Guzzi have managed to give the newcomer a name that isn't Scrambler, and even adds a historical link. The firm's original "Starling" (in Italian) was a small-capacity single that was popular in the Sixties and Seventies, and was produced in dual-purpose form with distinctive white paintwork and red frame.

The new V7 II Stornello gets similar treatment and, as the first part of its name suggests, it's heavily based on the existing V7 II trio of basic Stone, upmarket Special and sporty Racer.

There's no change to the pushrod-operated, shaft-drive V-twin motor, whose sticking-out cylinders were angled forward in last year's redesign, to give some additional legroom.

All three existing V7s are attractive bikes with a distinctive Moto Guzzi look, and the Stornello fits in well with its off-road slant. The most obvious change is a new high-level Arrow exhaust, which doesn't affect the motor's modest maximum output of 48bhp. Gaitered front forks and wire-spoked wheels with heavily patterned tyres contribute to the rugged image.



In reality the Stornello isn't designed for remotely serious off-roading, but Guzzi have incorporated some fresh details to make it seem a bit special. A numbered plaque on the top yoke, below the chrome-rimmed clocks, confirms it is one of a limited run of 1000 units. Its oval, competition-style number boards and both mudguards are made from aluminium; the dual-seat has a neatly stitched Moto Guzzi logo on its rear.



MOTO GUZZI STORNELLO





## TEST

The Stornello's wide, slightly raised one-piece handlebar and a marginally taller, thicker dual-seat give a bit more legroom, in combination with unchanged footrests. But with an unchanged tubular steel frame and conventional roadgoing suspension travel the Stornello is no lanky adventure bike. Its seat is a relatively manageable 798mm off the ground, and at 186kg without fuel the Guzzi is light enough to be easily manageable even for relatively short or inexperienced riders.

Provided you're not hoping for storming performance or all-terrain versatility, you're unlikely to be disappointed by the Stornello. It rides much like it looks: a friendly Golden Labrador of a bike that accelerates gently and without drama from low revs, stays sweet through the midrange, and doesn't vibrate too much even when it's revved hard.

With chin on the tank there's just about enough power to put 100mph on the speedo, but few riders are likely to bother. The Stornello prefers a more relaxed pace. It's happy being short-shifted through the six-speed gearbox, which was updated to good effect last year in Guzzi's V7 II revamp, and now works efficiently, the shaft-drive transmission's traditional crudeness thankfully gone.

Provided you stick to the road, the chassis is very much up to the job too. The gaitered forks and twin rear shocks are reasonably compliant yet well-controlled, combining good ride quality with fairly light, neutral steering that helps make the Stornello entertaining on a twisty road. The chunky looking tyres, from Italian supermoto specialist Goldentyre, grip fine. There's only a single Brembo disc at the front, as well as the rear, but that's enough for respectable stopping power, aided by a decent ABS system. The simple traction control system might occasionally earn its keep, especially in the wet.





**"IT ALL ADDS UP TO AN  
ATTRACTIVE, REASONABLY  
VERSATILE ROADSTER THAT  
IS PLEASANT RATHER THAN  
EXCITING TO RIDE..."**





## TEST

Like the Stone and Special, the Stornello should make a reasonably practical roadster. That softly-tuned V-twin is pretty economical, giving a typical 200-mile range from the big 21-litre tank. The generously sized and well-padded seat should let most owners cover that distance in reasonable comfort, too, at least one-up. (Like the other V7s, the Stornello is a bit small and underpowered for carrying a pillion.) The shaft-drive transmission minimises maintenance.

It all adds up to an attractive, reasonably versatile roadster that is pleasant rather than exciting to ride, but works sufficiently well to entertain experienced riders as well as novices. Those neat details mean that it's priced at the level of the glitzy Racer (at £8636 in the UK) rather than the less expensive Stone and Special. But that seems fair enough for a bike that adds a touch of off-road style, if not true riding ability, to its V7 siblings' timeless V-twin appeal.





MOTO GUZZI STORNELLO







## BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls  
By Monster Energy











-----  
**'On-track Off-road'** is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at [www.ontrackoffroad.com](http://www.ontrackoffroad.com) every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

**Adam Wheeler** Editor and MXGP/MotoGP correspondent

**Ray Archer** Photographer

**Steve Matthes** AMA MX and SX correspondent

**Cormac Ryan-Meenan** MotoGP Photographer [www.cormacgp.com](http://www.cormacgp.com)

**Simon Cudby** AMA SX/MX Photographer

**Matthew Roberts** Television Presenter and WSB correspondent

**Gavin Emmett** TV commentator/Presenter and MotoGP Reporter

**Núria García** Cover Design

**Gabi Álvarez** Web developer

**Hosting** FireThumb7 - [www.firethumb7.co.uk](http://www.firethumb7.co.uk)

Thanks to [www.mototribu.com](http://www.mototribu.com)

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Ray Archer, CormacGP, Simon Cudby, Adam Bolton, KTM

**Cover shot:** Cal Crutchlow by CormacGP

This publication took a lot of time and effort to put together so please respect it! Nothing in this publication can be reproduced in whole or part without the written permission of the editorial team. For more information please visit [www.ontrackoffroad.com](http://www.ontrackoffroad.com) and click 'Contact us'.